



Quarterly Meeting Briefing Book

November 19, 2024
11:00 AM

Josh Shapiro
Governor

Terry Wiltout
Chair



Quarterly Meeting Briefing Book

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Quarterly Meeting
November 19, 2024
Agenda (subject to change)

- 11:00 AM Call to Order – Chair’s Updates, Terry Wilttrout
- Roll Call (will be conducted via sign-in and Zoom attendance)
 - Approve August 14, 2024, Quarterly Meeting Minutes – **VOTE**
- 11:05 AM New Member Introductions
- Mayor Rita C. Frealing, City of Gettysburg
 - Nicholas Byrd, Software Engineering Manager, Google
- 11:15 AM PA WDB Committee Updates
- Youth, Chair Chekemma J. Fulmore-Townsend
 - Industry Partnership & Employer Engagement, Chair John “Ski” Sygielski
 - Continuous Improvement of the PA CareerLink® System, Chair Brian Funkhouser
 - Apprenticeship & CTE, Chair Angela Ferritto
 - Agriculture Workforce, Chair Brian Campbell
 - Manufacturing Workforce, Chair Mike Wojewodka
 - Construction Workforce, Chair Karen Masino
 - Education Workforce, Chair Timothy James
 - Healthcare Workforce, Chair Matt Yarnell
 - Recommendation on Collateral Consequences – **VOTE**
 - Reentry, Chair Debra Caplan
 - Recommendation on Government Contracts & Reentrants – **VOTE**
 - Barriers, Chair Shea Zwerver
 - Recommendations Related to Competitive Integrated Employment - **VOTES**
- 11:45 AM Update on Chair’s Initiative – Research on On-the-job and Incumbent Worker Training
- Kyle Longacre – Project Consultant PA CareerLink® Montgomery County
- 11:55 AM Explanation of Purpose and Legal Requirements during Breakout Sessions
- Robert Schramm, Deputy Chief Counsel, PA Department of Labor & Industry
 - James Martini, PA WDB Executive Director
- 12:00 PM Breakout Sessions – Increasing and Improving Employer Engagement with PA CareerLink®
- 1:00 PM Begin Working Lunch

- 1:15 PM Agency Updates
- Nancy Walker – Secretary Labor & Industry
 - Ryan Hyde – Executive Director Office of Vocational Rehabilitation
 - Khalid Mumin – Secretary Education
 - Valerie Arkoosh – Secretary Human Services
 - Rick Siger – Secretary Community and Economic Development
 - Russel Redding – Secretary Agriculture
 - Jason Kavulich – Secretary Aging
 - Laurel Harry – Secretary Corrections

1:50 PM Public Comment

2:00 PM Adjourn – **VOTE**

Next Meeting: February (exact date TBD) - Virtual

PA WDB Quarterly Board Meeting

Virtual Meeting

Wednesday, August 14th, 2024

10am-2pm

Meeting Minutes

Attendance

Members:

- Shea Zwerver
- Thomas Foley for Governor Josh Shapiro
- Jolene Reid for Secretary Valerie Arkoosh
- Robert S. Bair
- Eric Kratz for Sen. Camera Bartolotta
- Debra Caplan
- Sen. Amanda M. Cappelletti
- Anjelica Sanders for Rep. Morgan Cephas
- Don Cunningham
- Chekemma Fulmore-Townsend
- Kait Gillis
- Nicholas Gilson
- Tiffany Haley
- James N. Harper Jr.
- Dorenda Hamarlund for Secretary Dr. Laurel R. Harry
- Executive Director Ryan Hyde
- Timothy James
- Philip Jaurigue
- David Miles for Secretary Jason Kavulich
- Carniesha Kwashie
- Marguerite A. Kline
- Dan LaVallee
- Andrea MacArthur
- Andrew Bell for Rep. Ryan E. Mackenzie
- Malik Majeed
- Karen Masino
- Secretary Dr. Khalid Mumin
- Mark E. Pasquerilla
- Sara Gligora for Secretary Russell Redding
- Gregg Riefenstahl
- Roy Rosin
- Mike Shirk
- Gwen Ross for Secretary Rick Siger
- John J. "Ski" Sygielski
- Mark Thaler
- Jennifer Wakeman
- Secretary Nancy Walker
- Joseph P. Welsh
- Mike Wojewodka
- Matt Yarnell
- Deputy Secretary Dan Kuba

Committee Chairs:

- Chair John “Ski” Sygielski, Industry Partnership & Employer Engagement Committee
- Chair Chekemma Fulmore-Townsend, Youth Committee
- Erin Donohoe for Chair Angela Ferritto, Apprenticeship & CTE Committee
- Executive Director James Martini for Chair Brian Funkhouser, Continuous Improvement Committee
- Chair Matt Yarnell, Healthcare Committee
- Kristina Gonzalez for Chair Brian Campbell, Agriculture Committee
- Chair Tim James, Education Workforce Committee
- Belinda Nester for Chair Mike Wojewodka, Manufacturing Committee
- Dan De Lellis for Chair Karen Masino, Construction Committee
- Chair Debra Caplan, Reentry Committee
- Co-Chairs Shea Zwerver and Mohona Siddique, Barriers Committee

Staff: Executive Director James Martini, Deputy Director Michelle Lengel, Dan De Lellis, Belinda Nester, Erin Donohoe, Shannon Austin, Kristina Gonzalez

Chair’s Introductions:

Shea Zwerver sat in as chair on behalf of Chair Terry Wiltrout. She began by welcoming everyone to the meeting and officially called the meeting to order. She then sought a motion to approve the May meeting minutes.

MOTION: John “Ski” Sygielski made the motion and Debra Caplan seconded. It passed unanimously.

Chair Shea Zwerver then introduced a new member, Tiffany Haley, to the board. Tiffany Haley is the head of global talent acquisition for Vanguard and has her bachelor’s in business administration and her MBA from the University of Michigan. Tiffany highlighted that she has been living in Pennsylvania for the last 14 years and has worked in Human Resources for Vanguard since her time at the University of Michigan. She noted that working on talent topics has been a large part of her professional life and that much of the work she is doing in her role now intersects with the work of the board. She thanked everyone for having her and expressed her excitement towards being able to add to the Board.

Chair Shea thanked Tiffany and expressed excitement at working with her in the future. Chair Shea then introduced Kait Gillis to talk about her business’ visit with Governor Shapiro. Kait Gillis highlighted that the Governor and First Lady came to their coffee shop Nour in Camp Hill. She also highlighted that their coffee shop operates under a competitive integrated employment model, meaning they hire typically developed and neuro-diverse individuals. She noted that all employees work together and are paid the same wages. She expressed her pride in having the Governor and First Lady there and noted that they are both incredible advocates. She also highlighted that in the most recent budget, they were able to include funding that helps with support-providers wages and reducing wait lists for people to receive services. She emphasized the importance of knowing what services are available to employers if they are considering employing individuals with disabilities. She highlighted that her daughter has down syndrome and is the reason they created the shop and named it after her. She emphasized that the support they have received from OVR has been incredible and that it allows people to work and have an everyday life, but it also contributes to the economy and tax dollars. She noted that for some of their employees it’s not

just nice to have these supports, but critical. She highlighted that if anyone has any questions about how they can better support individuals with disabilities, she is not an expert but is an advocate for this. She ended by thanking everyone and the administration for their support and invited anyone in Central Pennsylvania to come visit Nour Coffee.

Chair Shea thanked Kait Gillis for sharing. She also highlighted that they did have a change to the agenda and would no longer be receiving a presentation from the Trade Institute of Pittsburgh but that they plan to have them at the next Board meeting instead.

Chair Updates

Executive Director James Martini gave the chair updates on behalf of Chair Terry Wiltrot. He began by highlighting that Pennsylvania CareerLink® Awareness Day will occur between August 26th through September 13th. He noted that these events are a great way for the community to come out and learn about the great things that the PA CareerLink® does. He also highlighted that Chair Wiltrot is looking to put together a playbook on promising practices around on the job training and incumbent worker training. He noted that they put out a request to the State's local workforce boards to share what is going well and what is a challenge so that areas can learn from each other. He emphasized that this has been an important project for Chair Wiltrot and they are very excited to get that work started. Executive Director Martini also noted that it has been about a year since many members were appointed to the Board, and private sector members will be receiving an email from himself and Belinda Nester from the Board staff to set up check ins to learn about what is working and what can be better with the Workforce Board. Lastly, he highlighted that they will be having an in-person option for the Board's November meeting in Bethlehem, PA and will take place immediately after the Apprenticeship PA Week celebration.

Workforce Development Board Committee Updates:

- **Industry Partnership and Employer Engagement Committee, Chair John "Ski" Sygielski**
Chair Ski began his committee report by emphasizing that members should consider visiting Nour Coffee Shop. He noted that the committee is working with and engaging employers to get a better understanding on an employability certification being develop with the Pennsylvania Departments of Labor & Industry and Education. He highlighted that they will be having several meetings to gather feedback and hope to compile it all at their August meeting and report back out on that certificate at the Board's November meeting.
- **Reentry Committee, Chair Debra Caplan**
Chair Debra Caplan emphasized that the Reentry Committee had a great last quarter. She highlighted that the Committee has continued to gain knowledge from experts in the field and in June, the Committee had a viewing of the film *Pardon Me* created by Shuja Moore and learned about the process to apply for a pardon from a current pardon coach. She noted from that presentation and the film, the Committee learned that there are many further opportunities to educate those involved in the justice system about the pardon process and that they plan to continue working on that. She highlighted that in August the Committee had a presentation on the nonprofit, nonpartisan organization called VoteRiders and learned about their efforts to expand ID access across Pennsylvania. She emphasized that there were parallel goals between VoteRiders' work and the Committee's efforts to increase ID access for reentrants and they plan to explore how they may support VoteRiders. She highlighted that a committee member working

with BWPO agreed along with the Committee that VoteRiders' resources should be circulated at PA CareerLink® centers across the state as a means of raising awareness. She noted that this goes towards the Committee's first priority, increasing ID access. She also noted that they spent some time looking at their priorities for 2024 and she highlighted that one of them relates to organizing employer roundtables. She also noted that they plan to further explore the usage of SkillUp™ in correctional facilities across the State and emphasized that the Committee plans to regularly revisit their priorities to ensure their work is addressing them. She noted in summation, the Committee plans to continue addressing their priorities, work with BWPO and VoteRiders to circulate their resources in PA CareerLink® centers, assemble a subcommittee to organize employer roundtables, and continue to hold presentations from subject matter experts where helpful.

Chair Shea thanked Debra for her report and noted that the Board can find the trailer and scheduled screenings of *Pardon Me* at this link: [Pardon Me \(pardonsnow.org\)](https://pardonsnow.org). Debra thanked Shea and also thanked her committee for their active participation and efforts.

- **Continuous Improvement of the PA CareerLink® Committee, Chair Brian Funkhouser**
Executive Director James Martini gave the committee update on behalf of its chair, Brian Funkhouser. He began by noting that at their last meeting they received a joint presentation from Crystal Houser, Director of the Bureau of Workforce Partnership and Operations (BWPO), and Kate Loyd, Digital Director of the PA Department of Labor & Industry. He highlighted that the presentation covered the investment L&I has made into marketing PA CareerLink® and the workforce development system. He emphasized that the Committee learned a lot about how marketing and branding is done in the Commonwealth and highlighted that they learned that L&I has invested around \$1 million since 2023 into raising awareness about PA CareerLink® for both workers and employers.
- **Apprenticeship & CTE Committee, Chair Angela Ferritto**
Erin Donohoe gave the committee update on behalf of its chair, Angela Ferritto. Erin noted that the Committee started with a focus on learning the landscape of registered apprenticeships and the Board approved their request to commission research on what the current landscape is. She highlighted that the research is currently ongoing and that Committee members have been regularly updated on the progress. She noted that they have all their data gathered and they now have an outline for the report to come. She emphasized that the Apprenticeship and Training Office and a few other offices within L&I have been helpful in getting the Keystone Research Center all the data they needed for this report. While the report is being made, she highlighted that the committee is discussing career and technical education, and anyone interested in joining in on that topic should reach out to her. She noted that they are discussing how to expand participation in career and technical education by non-traditional and underrepresented populations, and that she can share previous discussion notes if anyone is interested. She highlighted that Judd Pitman from the PA Department of Education has been presenting at their meetings and sharing information about demographic breakdowns of current students in career and tech ed. She ended by sharing anyone interested in joining should reach out to her.

- **Agriculture Committee, Chair Brian Campbell**

Kristina Gonzalez gave the committee update on behalf of its chair, Brian Campbell. She began by noting that the Committee has continued working on its two main areas of focus. She highlighted that the H-2A and H-2B subcommittee conducted a survey of users of the H-2A and H-2B visa programs which finished back in May. She highlighted that they received 97 responses with 63 of those using the H-2A program only, 1 using the H-2B program only, and 6 using both programs. She noted that many committee members also use these visa programs and a lot of the respondents noted similar challenges as their members. She also highlighted that most strikingly, many respondents noted that without these programs, they would be forced to close or significantly reduce their businesses. She noted that the committee recognizes the gravity of this situation and is having discussions around what they want to do with these results moving forward. She noted that the Committee plans to vote on what their next step will be, and the subcommittee will undertake the work needed to accomplish that step. She ended by highlighting that the Committee meets bimonthly and their next meeting will be in October.

- **Manufacturing Committee, Chair Mike Wojewodka**

Belinda Nester gave the Committee update on behalf of its chair, Mike Wojewodka. She began by highlighting that at their July meeting they were able to have an informative presentation from Andrea Heberlein of the PA Early Learning Investment Commission that explained the various services and resources available to assist in addressing childcare barriers. She noted that the Committee received approval to create a central repository for manufacturing resources and they have begun to form a team to create this. She emphasized that the committee is especially excited for this repository. She ended by emphasizing that the Committee looks forward to continuing to meet with Departmental stakeholders and intends to engage with other WDB committees to better understand what existing programs and initiatives are available and how the Committee can best leverage those resources.

- **Construction Workforce Committee, Chair Karen Masino**

Dan De Lellis gave the Committee update on behalf of its chair, Karen Masino. He began by highlighting that the Committee's work has mainly been focused on driver's licenses and specifically access to driver's licenses, which not only impacts the Construction industry, but the workforce in entirety. He emphasized that driver's licenses are particularly important for those working in the construction and trade industries since their work is usually out in the community and requires people to travel to where those jobs are. He noted that they highlighted the significant impact that the construction and trades workforce has faced by the reduction in the availability of driver's education programs at the high school level and the importance of getting these programs restored. He noted that this decline in driver's education programs has had an impact on the ability of students to enter into construction and trades workforce and emphasized that the committee is passionate about this topic. He noted that the committee engaged in discussion on this topic and were unanimous in their support for the recommendation on this topic. He highlighted that the Committee also had an outstanding presentation on a construction industry partnership operating in the South-Central Workforce board area. He noted that the Committee encourages the Board's other committees to consider having related industry partnerships come present at their meetings.

Dan De Lellis then presented the Committee's recommendation on behalf of Chair Karen Masino regarding the development or reinstatement of driver's education programs. He began by noting that this is the Committee's third recommendation so far. He highlighted that unlike many occupations with fixed occupations, careers in construction and building trades typically have an array of job sites that can be anywhere in the community. He emphasized that ensuring students can successfully obtain their driver's license is vital to preparing students for careers in construction and building trades and is necessary to perform basic job duties at the worksite. He noted that historically, driver's education programs played a major role in meeting this need but because school districts have cut back on driver's education programs due to fiscal constraints, these programs are now scarce. He noted that there are multiple forms of driver's education programs ranging from textbook, to virtual, and actually driving on the road.

MOTION: Chair Shea Zwerver sought a motion to approve the recommendation. John "Ski" Sygielski made the motion and Joe Welsh seconded. It passed unanimously.

- **Healthcare Workforce Committee, Chair Matt Yarnell**

Chair Matt Yarnell began his committee report by highlighting that the Committee is focused on two major topics. One of those topics, was brought to the Committee's attention by one of the report outs at the last board meeting and that was the substantial challenge that criminal backgrounds present for most jobs in healthcare. He noted that there are underlying state rules that need to be reviewed and many rules currently that seem to impose disproportionately harsh penalties, in some cases extreme consequences such as an indefinite ban on healthcare jobs. He gave an example being that a person can be permanently banned from working at a skilled nursing home due to a shoplifting offense as a young adult. He highlighted that the Committee plans to further discuss this topic and potentially develop a recommendation around this issue for board action. He noted that they want to look at the state rules and statutes around this topic and develop a review process to look at those. He highlighted that the second topic the committee is looking at is the workforce shortages and challenges for emergency medical services (EMTs and Paramedics). He noted that this problem affects all areas of the state but especially in rural areas and is further compounded by the decline of the volunteer service model. He highlighted that the committee plans to continue exploring this topic as well as have committee presentations from two industry partnerships focused on EMS workforce needs. He ended by highlighting that the Committee meets bi-monthly.

- **Education Shortage Committee, Chair Tim James**

Chair Tim James began by emphasizing that the Committee's full report can be found in the briefing book. He highlighted that the committee is making progress on some recommendations and going through the data that is available to them as well as looking at the process for teacher certification and where some changes could be made. He emphasized that the Committee has been fortunate to have Laura Boyce and Ed Fuller who are working across this Committee as well as PDE's committee on education talent and recruitment and are very knowledgeable on this area and helped in developing the Committee's recommendation to the board. He noted that they plan to continue analyzing certification pathways and barriers to entry into the field, and looking at possible future recommendations as well.

Chair Tim James then moved into presenting the Committee's recommendation regarding the establishment of an Educator Workforce Data Hub on the PDE website. He began by noting that

it is a complicated system right now and there are nearly 100 certification pathways with their own forms of evaluations and requirements. He noted that having all those evaluations and requirements are all valuable when you are trying to ensure you have the highest quality for every bit of training in the teacher certification process. He emphasized however, that we now have a different problem which is that there is a big gap between the number of teachers entering the field and the open positions for teachers. He noted that there must be a shift to work on this problem but in order to do that, the data is necessary. He highlighted that this recommendation is about trying to make sure we are doing what is required by law in PDE and recommending that the group continue to collaborate and post this information publicly. Chair Tim James opened it up to the board for any questions or concerns.

MOTION: John “Ski” Sygielski made the motion and Matt Yarnell seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

- **Youth Committee, Chair Chekemma J. Fulmore-Townsend**

Chair Chekemma Fulmore-Townsend began by noting that the Committee’s full report can be found on page 17 in the briefing book. She highlighted that at the last Committee meeting they received an update on the proposed TANF guidelines since that was a concern brought up at the February full board meeting. She noted that they received a presentation on these guidelines, but they are sort of in a holding right now on this issue. She emphasized that nothing has been made final with these proposed guidelines which makes it difficult to make a recommendation about what we should and that right now, we are all sort of at the mercy of the Federal government. She did emphasize however, that the Committee has made sure that everyone is aware of their concerns, and they educated themselves on what this would mean and are now waiting to see how this plays out. She emphasized that once the ruling is finalized, they will consider any possible recommendations. She highlighted that the Committee has many topics it could pursue next so they are trying to limit their exploration to what would be most impactful right now. She noted that they are exploring co-enrollment strategies and making the most of limited resources. She also highlighted that they are continuing to refine their research question and want to make sure they can reflect the impact of the investments made thus far and are working with the Pennsylvania Longitudinal Data System to ensure that. She ended by noting that she is excited to look at where opportunities for young people to learn critical workforce skills can be restored and commended the Construction Committee for recommending the reinstatement of driver’s education programs.

- **Barrier Remediation Committee, Co-Chair Shea Zwerver**

Co-Chair Shea Zwerver began her Committee report by highlighting that the Committee meets monthly and is co-chaired by her and Mohona Siddique. She noted that they began by looking at the digital intake form and have now started looking at WIOA State Plan sub-goal 5.2 and are mostly focusing on sub-minimum wage for 14(c) certificates. For time, Co-Chair Shea Zwerver then moved into the Committee’s recommendations for the Board.

Co-Chair Shea Zwerver noted that the Barrier Remediation Committee’s recommendations start on page 31 of the briefing book. She noted that the Committee has a few recommendations that fall under three buckets. She noted one of those buckets is the implementation of the intake form and she noted that the digital intake form was implemented about a year ago in all the PA CareerLink® sites. She highlighted that individuals coming into these centers are filling out these

forms which capture a lot of data on the people utilizing these services. She highlighted that they have been working closely with Crystal Houser and her team and the Committee had a great presentation from them on this form and the data collected thus far. She emphasized that these recommendations have stemmed from that presentation and those conversations. She then introduced the Committee's first recommendation regarding the insurance that all PA CareerLink® customers fill out the intake form regardless of where they access PA CareerLink®. She emphasized that currently, the digital intake form is only being deployed on site at the PA CareerLink® sites.

MOTION: John "Ski" Sygielski made the motion to accept this recommendation and Mark Pasquerilla seconded. It passed unanimously.

Co-Chair Shea Zwerver then presented the Committee's second recommendation regarding the digital intake data interfacing across agencies and programs. She noted that this recommendation still falls under the same bucket as the first recommendation, which is the implementation of the form. She noted that currently, each agency develops and funds their own intake for the residents they serve. She emphasized that this recommendation is to help co-enroll participants in the programs that would support them best.

MOTION: Joe Welsh made the motion to accept this recommendation and John "Ski" Sygielski seconded. It passed unanimously.

Co-Chair Shea Zwerver then moved to the third, fourth, and fifth recommendations and highlighted that they fall into the bucket of using the intake data. She then presented the third recommendation regarding quarterly reports on the information gathered in the intake form for the PA WDB and local boards. She noted that as of Spring 2024, the digital intake form rollout is officially complete, and L&I is in its first year receiving data from the entire Commonwealth and is already releasing summative reports back to the local boards.

MOTION: Joe Welsh made the motion to accept the recommendation and Debra Caplan seconded. It passed unanimously.

Co-Chair Shea Zwerver then presented the fourth recommendation regarding leveraging on-demand courses for workforce staff to effectively make referrals based on the information collected from the digital intake form. She emphasized that the digital intake form is a tool to help staff understand customers' needs, but skilled staff make the program connections happen. She also highlighted that currently, PDE and L&I have developed two on-demand courses for workforce staff.

MOTION: Co-Chair Shea Zwerver sought a motion to approve the recommendation. Joe Welsh made the motion and John "Ski" Sygielski seconded. It passed unanimously.

Co-Chair Shea Zwerver then presented the Committee's fifth recommendation regarding the incorporation of data from the Commonwealth Workforce Data System (CWDS) and the digital intake form into research projects undertaken by the Pennsylvania Longitudinal Data System (PALDS). She highlighted that this would help build out more complete participant profiles, including barriers and the supports and interventions received.

MOTION: Co-Chair Shea Zwerver sought a motion to approve the recommendation. Debra Caplan made the motion and Joe Welsh seconded. It passed unanimously.

Co-Chair Shea Zwerver then introduced the last two recommendations and noted that they relate to ongoing improvements to the digital intake form itself. She then presented the fifth recommendation around explaining the available services more clearly to customers when listing service or program titles. She highlighted that this could be adding an option that allows customers to hover over an option and receive an explanation of each of the terms, so they know what is meant by things such as, adult basic education. She noted that currently it is a list of employment services and customers can select which services they're interested in learning more about.

MOTION: Co-Chair Shea Zwerver sought a motion to approve the recommendation. Joe Welsh made the motion and Debra Caplan seconded. It passed unanimously.

Co-Chair Shea Zwerver then presented the last recommendation around including an option for disability support in the section "the following would make it easier for me to get or keep a job" in the intake form.

MOTION: John "Ski" Sygielski made the motion to accept the recommendation and Matt Yarnell seconded. It passed unanimously.

Agency Official Updates

- **Russell Redding, Secretary of the PA Department of Agriculture (PDA)**

Sara Gligora gave the Department update on behalf of Secretary Russell Redding. Sara began by highlighting that the Department was celebrating Ag Progress Days at Penn State. She noted that they are continuing to work on apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships in agriculture. She highlighted that the Department was excited to see that Rodale Institute was awarded \$350,000 from L&I through PAsmart's Supporting Pennsylvania's Organic Agriculture. She emphasized that this is going to help meet the skilled workforce needs in organic agriculture. Sara Gligora also noted that the School District of Philadelphia was awarded a \$250,000 Schools-to-Work grant through L&I to expand agriculture career education and develop a pre-apprenticeship program focused on controlled environment agriculture. She highlighted that this pre-apprenticeship would offer 24 students each year the opportunity to learn about technology within indoor farming and will provide the opportunity to advance into the district's registered apprenticeship program. She highlighted that they had the opportunity to tour the school and Fox Chase Farms with L&I to really see what the program will offer. She also highlighted that Penn State's Butcher Apprenticeship Program received \$90,000 from DCED as part of their Foundations in Industry Training (FIT) Grant. She emphasized that the Department is excited to see the collaboration and support across state agencies to build up their programs. Sara Gligora also highlighted that the PA Commission for Agricultural Education Excellence recently named a new executive director, Chris Davis. She highlighted that Chris Davis previously worked with the Department of Education as an Ag. Specialist and prior to that role spent 10 years teaching ag. Education. She also highlighted that in July the Department hosted Urban Ag Week and opened its Urban Agriculture Grants. She noted that they toured urban agriculture facilities across the state, and several of them had workforce components and training opportunities. She also highlighted they were able to award

the first ever Frontline Ag Worker of the Year award on Farm Worker Appreciation Day and was a way to celebrate all the agriculture frontline workers. She ended by thanking everyone and emphasized that it is exciting to see the increased collaboration with the other agencies.

- **Nancy Walker, Secretary of the PA Department of Labor and Industry (L&I)**

Secretary Walker began by emphasizing that L&I enjoys being able to collaborate with Ag and was glad to join the team. She thanked all the Committees for their work and commended them on their efforts. She also thanked James Martini and his team for shepherding this work. She then gave an overview of the budget that was just recently passed. She highlighted that they got a \$30 million increase in CTE and vocational tech education and got an additional \$12.5 million for apprenticeships to continue building on their 40 new registered apprenticeship programs. She highlighted that the Governor has also secured an additional \$2 million for registered apprenticeships specifically for nursing which is still a challenge area for staff. She noted that they also got a \$10 million increase for their student teacher stipends. Secretary Walker also expressed her excitement that the legislature has agreed to leverage funds from the Service Improvement Infrastructure Fund (SIIF) to make sure that the Unemployment Compensation System is continuing to work as well as it is and continuing to build out. She ended by thanking everyone for their time.

- **Ryan Hyde, Executive Director for the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR)**

Executive Director Ryan Hyde began by highlighting that OVR's mission is to help Pennsylvanians with disabilities to secure and maintain employment and independence. He noted that they are wrapping up a lot of their summer activities. He highlighted that they had around 20 college students participate in the Commonwealth Summer Internship Program and three of the students were asked to stay on for an extended internship. He also highlighted that those students had the opportunity to go to the Governor's residence and attend a meet and greet with the Governor and First Lady. He also noted that one of their former interns has moved on to become a Commonwealth employee with the Office of Administration. Executive Director Ryan Hyde then went on to highlight OVR's MY Work program which he noted is one of OVR's signature programs. He highlighted that they served around 1,000 students across the Commonwealth in various different employment locations. He noted that it was a great opportunity for students to grow and learn work skills and many employers spoke highly of the students. He highlighted that they are always looking for more employer partners. He highlighted that they also held two summer academies at Penn State University; one for students who are blind or visually impaired and one for students who are deaf or hard of hearing. He noted that these academies are for high school students planning to pursue college after their graduation and this year the academies focused on communication, assistive technology, and a new artificial intelligence course focused on how it can be used as an accommodation but also the ethics behind it. Executive Director Ryan Hyde also highlighted that he was selected to meet with the federal RSA Commissioner, Dante Allen. He noted that Dante Allen asked out to several states to learn about their work and asked a lot of questions about their partnerships and was impressed with the work that Pennsylvania is doing. He noted that OVR's biggest concern right now is that they were flat funded from the federal government which is where most of their funding comes from. He noted that they are a formula program so normally they would receive an increase and because they were flat funded, they lost around \$13 million and are now tracking the next budget cycle. He noted that it is looking likely that the national VR program will be flat funded again for Fiscal Year 2025. Because of that, he

noted that they are making changes to their programs to manage this potential reduction. He noted that they are anticipating that it will be a challenging year for their program and will be sure to keep everyone informed. He also emphasized that they would always appreciate any advocacy from the Board. He highlighted that they did get a modest increase in the state budget which was greatly appreciated. He then noted that there are three big grants that they are working on. He highlighted that their Pathways to Partnership (PTP) grant was awarded last September and was for around \$10 million to implement comprehensive training and coordination between OVR, local education entities, PDE, Office of Development Programs (ODP), and many other stakeholders. He highlighted that it kicked off at the Pennsylvania Transition Conference in the first week of August. He noted that everyone involved will begin receiving training over the next few years. The next grant he highlighted was their Subminimum Wage to Competitive Integrated Employment grant and he noted that they have selected both vendors for the East and West. He highlighted that they have KenCrest for the East and Achieva for the West and will also be working with Sheetz and a few other employer partners. He noted that the goal of that grant is to either help keep people away from subminimum wage employment or get them out of subminimum wage employment. Lastly, he noted that they submitted a new grant proposal for the Disability Innovation Fund that will focus on purchasing driver simulators for all intermediate units (IU) across Pennsylvania and would be used to evaluate students with disabilities' abilities to drive. He highlighted they would also use the grant to staff occupational therapists at the IUs to do these evaluations and some of the grant could also be used for driver's training if necessary. He emphasized that transportation is a huge barrier for people with disabilities and so they are hopeful that they will receive this grant and plan to be notified sometime in October. He also thanked the Workforce Development Board for identifying a member to serve on the PA Rehabilitation Council.

- **Dan Kuba, Deputy Secretary of Workforce Development for L&I**

Deputy Secretary Dan Kuba began by noting that the Workforce Deputate's report begins on page 35. He emphasized that he is proud to see that the bureaus in the Workforce Deputate are enshrined in the Committees of this Board and highlighted how critical it is to have that involvement. He highlighted that they are constantly learning about new programs in other agencies and emphasized that this is so important to share especially when looking at how to address individuals' barriers. He highlighted that right now they have a lot going on within the Apprenticeship and Training Office (ATO). He noted that they are looking at several different areas for apprenticeship including, organics as Sara Gligora had mentioned, healthcare, doulas, and other occupations. He also highlighted that they have a lot of work going on with PDE within career and technical education and the creation of an employability certification. He noted that they are seeing push from high schools, school districts and some employers on this certification and is something that PDE and L&I have been working on together. He also highlighted that Governor Shapiro has pushed them to look at how they can improve how they provide services to the general public; with part of that being monitoring which is always a challenge. He noted that they have included some updates on the monitoring system within the briefing book and that they are hoping with feedback from the local boards, this will be a less of demand on their time. He also highlighted that one of their initiatives with Unemployment Compensation (UC) is the installation of ID.Me kiosks in all the PA CareerLink® centers as well as in UPS stores around Pennsylvania. He noted that it takes about 10 minutes to complete an ID.Me process and is a huge

change from prior to these kiosks. He also emphasized that the UC Office has been an outstanding partner in helping get these up and running and reducing the cost on their PA CareerLink® partners. He also highlighted that Aug 26th through September 13th is PA CareerLink® Awareness Days and that Secretary Walker, Executive Director James Martini, himself, and others will be going out to PA CareerLink® centers to show their support. He also highlighted that L&I has been a primary support for the Department of Natural Resources' (DCNR) Outdoor Corps program and OVR has also partnered to include OVR participants in Outdoor Corps. He noted that there is an adult component of Outdoor Corps and agencies also have workforce needs as well and they are proud to say that 52 individuals from Outdoor Corps over the last few years have been hired at DCNR. He highlighted in this new budget; L&I has received an increase to \$5 million to support Outdoor Corps and will be working with local organizations to get awareness out about this program. He also highlighted that over the last two years there has been a lot of discussion around what kind of marketing and outreach is being done for the workforce system. He noted over the last several years, they have typically invested around \$1 million towards outreach efforts but recently since this has been a bigger issue, they are going to create a workgroup with state and local partners to create the next marketing campaign and strategize how to use these funds better. He also highlighted that workforce staff are working with locals to get the best practices that exist to get more consistency across the boards. He noted that they are holding monthly meetings with their Strategic Early Warning Network and Rapid Response Staff to make sure their messaging is showing how these teams can support employers. He emphasized that Special Assistant Carol Momjian specializes in this work and has been crucial in this work. He also highlighted that they are looking at how they can begin helping employers proactively when it comes to layoffs and other issues. He also noted that they have a company in the southwest area of the state that just recently reached out and had never worked with the state before, and they are now working with them to look at how they are helping their workforce in regards to wages, training, and more. He also noted that they are working on creating a template for pre-apprenticeships inside prisons and are working with DOC to move this forward. He highlighted that their goal is to launch a registered pre-apprenticeship inside prisons to help get reentrants onto a career pathway before they leave. He noted that based on the data from the digital intake form and the UI Claim outreach campaign, it was clear that foundational documents such as birth certificates are barriers to work for those they serve at the PA CareerLink® Centers. He noted that based on this, workforce staff is working with the Department of Health to provide on the spot birth certificates to PA CareerLink® customers during outreach events. He emphasized that this is crucial, and they will be setting up MOUs to cover the costs of those documents and are also in conversations with PennDOT on getting IDs in the future as well. He lastly noted that in Pennsylvania there are around 200,000 vacant occupations and there are not enough workers to fulfill those jobs. He noted that in Washington County, they have procured in-person translations services, and the local team is looking to provide a paid work experience for a member of the community to provide translation services to the Haitian immigrant community there, to get them into those open occupations in Pennsylvania. He emphasized that in many areas with high immigrant populations, many ESL classes are at maximum capacity so they are looking at how they can work with employers to provide those services as well.

- **Dr. Khalid Mumin, Secretary of the PA Department of Education (PDE)**

Secretary Dr. Khalid Mumin began his report by emphasizing that the Committee reports are inspiring and noted that it is great to see the collaboration among the Committees and Departments. He highlighted that the Department's full report can be found on page 46 of the briefing book for the quarter. He emphasized that PDE is very excited about the \$10 million increase for student teacher stipends as mentioned by Secretary Walker, and he noted that increase doubles last year's investment. He highlighted that this PA Student Teacher Support Program provides \$10,000 to student teachers and an additional \$5,000 to student teachers working in high-need areas. He emphasized that this was an extremely popular program in its first year with over 3,500 student teachers applying. He noted that with this new funding level, they have estimated that 1,200 to 1,300 education students will be awarded funds. He noted that that would take approximately \$45 million to fully fund the program, so this is still a work in progress, and he emphasized that Shapiro's Administration has been critical to getting this across the finish line. He highlighted that there has been a \$30 million increase in Career and Technical Education (CTE) which brings funding to a total of \$144 million dollars. He noted that this also increases CTE equipment grant funding by \$5 million which takes that total funding to \$20 million. He emphasized that they are constantly building and noted that it is exciting to have the legislature buy in for this as a workforce need. Secretary Mumin also highlighted that PDE received an increase of \$7 million to support dual enrollment opportunities for high school students, allowing them to take advance courses for college credit. He emphasized that this is a step forward in getting students in line with the workforce needs throughout the Commonwealth. He emphasized that this is a way for underserved students to start some college courses and reduce some of the cost for college. He highlighted that one of his own deputate's daughter is getting ready to walk into college with 42 credits because of dual enrollment. He highlighted that with the combined effort of PDE, the legislators, and the Governor, the state has created a State Board of Higher Education to provide support and coordination to ensure that higher education is meeting the workforce needs in Pennsylvania. He highlighted that this entails providing critical increases to community colleges and the PASSHE schools, including a \$15.7 million increase for community colleges and \$35.1 million increase for PASSHE schools. He also highlighted that this new system also provides increased funding for the state's two historically Black colleges/universities (HBCUs); Cheyney University will receive a \$992,000 increase and Lincoln University will receive a \$2.4 million increase. He highlighted that this plan overall delivers \$122 million in increased funding for scholarships and grants which includes, \$54 million increase to PHEAA for student grants and \$5 million increase for disadvantaged students' scholarships. He noted that with these investments in place, they now have the opportunity to bolster their efforts in regard to workforce and that it is a great opportunity to see how the K-12 space and the higher education space can work with workforce development. He noted that he hopes that at their next report out they can be further into this coordination.

- **Valerie Arkoosh, Secretary of the PA Department of Human Services (DHS)**

Jolene Reid spoke on behalf of Secretary Arkoosh and began by highlighting that there are a lot of updates from the four different DHS offices and to get the details on all of those, members should review pages 48-50 of the briefing book. She noted that from the Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL), they held their Professional Development Organization (PDO) Conference on June 11th and 12th and had 145 participants attend. She highlighted that those participants included PDO direct staff, partner representatives, institutions of higher

education, and community-based Professional Learning Organizations. She highlighted that the class of 2024 included 166 individuals completing their Child Development Associate, 33 completing their Associate's degree, and 95 completing their Bachelor's degree. She noted from the Office of Children, Youth, and Families (OCYF), that in June they released their Caseworker Recruitment and Retention Study which includes 43 recommendations across six themes that address the primary issues driving attrition in county children and youth agencies (CCYAs). She highlighted that those themes are cross-cutting, compensation, recruiting, caseload amounts, training, and safe/supportive workplaces. She emphasized that there is no one size fits all recommendation for every county agency, the goal is that each CCYAs will find a host of helpful ideas to improve employee recruitment and retention. She highlighted that OCYF will continue to engage with counties and expand discussion with the County Commissioner's Association of Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania Children and Youth Administrators, Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts, DHS Leadership, and legislative partners. She noted from the Office of Development Programs (ODP), that in the month of June they hosted four regional employment symposiums attended by over 350 individuals across the Commonwealth. She highlighted that these symposiums were aimed at employment champions and provided space to elevate the voice of employers, individuals with disabilities, direct support professionals, supported employment providers, and families to share the importance of competitive integrated employment as well as share advice on how to pursue employment. She highlighted that during the symposium, participants heard from employers about how, what, and why they hired individuals with development disabilities. She also noted that individuals who are employed shared how having a job has impacted their lives and the lives of their families. She highlighted that representatives from ODP and OVR discussed collaboration across systems and offices with a focus on exciting opportunities previously thought impossible. She also noted some updates from the Office of Income Maintenance (OIM). She highlighted a change in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Able-Bodied Adults without Dependents Incremental Age due to the Fiscal Responsibility Act (FRA). She noted that the age range is currently 18 through 52, but as of October 1st, 2024, it will be 18 through 54. She also highlighted that DHS submitted its SNAP ABAWD waiver request to FNS for federal fiscal year 2025 to begin September 1st, 2024. She noted that FNS has 60 days to respond to the waiver request and they hope to have updated information soon. She also highlighted that DHS posted a 3-Lot Refugee Program request for applications (RFA) on eMarketplace on July 15th, 2024. She noted that Lot 1 is for Refugee Support Services (RSS) and the purpose of these services is to increase economic self-sufficiency among refugees who are newly arriving and have been in the US less than 5 years. Lot 2 is for Services to Unaccompanied Refugee Minors (URM) and she noted that the federal government operates the URM program to address the needs of refugee children who have been identified abroad or post-arrival without a parent or guardian. She highlighted that Pennsylvania's URM program is part of this national effort to resettle youth deemed eligible for URM status in the U.S. or arriving to the U.S. from overseas. Lot 3 is for services to older refugees and provides social and supportive services to refugees who are 60 years of age and over. She highlighted that solicitations are due August 30th, 2024, and those awarded grants are expected to begin to serve newly arriving refugees with a grant start date of October 1st, 2024. She also highlighted that the Federal Register has re-released the final rule date for the Strengthening of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) as December 2024 and was previously listed as April 2024. She emphasized that

there is a chance that the final TANF rule will post with different or updated guidance than what was included in the first NPR and she highlighted that if that happens, DHS will provide an updated analysis to share with the group. She lastly highlighted that on August 16th, 2024, DHS, Allegheny County Assistance Office, and the Community College of Allegheny County (CCAC) will host the first benefits outreach event in conjunction with Just Harvest and the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank. She noted that the event will provide low-income students with information and assistance to apply for DHS benefits and programming, including SNAP, TANF, as well as determine eligibility for the Keystone Education Yields Success (KEYS) program. She noted that KEYS provides education and social supports for eligible students to help them succeed in community college and pursue educational and work goals. CCAC is one of 14 Pennsylvania community colleges that offers the KEYS program. She ended by highlighting that her report was just highlights and encouraged everyone to check out DHS' full report in the briefing book.

- **Rick Siger, Secretary of the PA Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED)**
Gwen Ross spoke on behalf of Secretary Rick Siger and noted that their full report can be found on page 51 of the briefing book. She noted that DCED was fortunate that their workforce development program was level funded for 2024. She noted they are looking at \$8 million for their Workforce & Economic Development Network of Pennsylvania (WEDnet) which is their incumbent worker training program. She highlighted that they also received \$4.7 million for the Manufacturing PA Training to Career grant program which supports the manufacturing industry through awareness and short-term training programming. They also received \$3 million for the Foundations in Industry Training (FIT) Grant Program which supports registered apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships.
- **Jason Kavulich, Secretary of the PA Department of Aging**
David Miles spoke on behalf of Secretary Kavulich and noted that they do not have much to highlight other than what is included in the briefing book. He highlighted that their Senior Community Service Employment Program was renewed for another year, and they will continue to run that program.
- **Laurel Harry, Secretary of the PA Department of Corrections (DOC)**
Dorenda Hamarlund gave the report on behalf of Secretary Harry and began by highlighting that their full report can be found on pages 57 and 58 of the briefing book but that she would highlight a few items. She noted that the DOC had researched the possibility of starting a Home Health Aide Program inside their state facilities. She noted that unfortunately, they are unable to move forward with that due to statutes, laws, and regulations. She highlighted that the specific code barring this is included in their report in the briefing book. She noted that if anyone plans to have discussions around changing that, to include her and DOC in on that. She highlighted that back in July, DOC had planned to have a "Demo Day" at SCI Rockview with their Farm, Agriculture, Nursery, and Forestry camp but unfortunately, their goal was to get 20 employers and they only had around 3. She noted that they decided to postpone that event and it is now rescheduled for October 29th. She emphasized that if there are any interested employers in that realm that are interested in coming to see what DOC does with those camps to reach out to her via email. She also noted that a lot of people have been asking about their reentry job fairs; she highlighted those have been renamed The Network for Success Fairs and they are working on the 2024 calendar for those now. She noted if anyone is interested in attending any of those fairs, to reach out to her. She noted that they are always looking to get employers from different areas because

state inmates can be housed anywhere in PA's 67 counties and might not necessarily be located in their home county.

Chair Shea Zwerver thanked Dorenda for DOC's update and encouraged the group to help recruit employers to visit Rockview. She emphasized that they are great programs, and it helps to break the stigma by seeing these programs in person.

Public Comments: Carrie Amann from the Pennsylvania Workforce Development Association (PWDA) emphasized Executive Director Ryan Hyde's comments on federal advocacy and highlighted how important it is and how critical it is to stay up to date on what is going on in Washington D.C. She expressed that while they are grateful that Governor Shapiro is such a champion for workforce development investments, the reality is that Pennsylvania's workforce system is predominantly defined and funded federally. She noted that their concerns at the association with that, is that as long as Pennsylvania is defined by rules and politics in D.C, Pennsylvania's employers, jobseekers, workers, and organizations are far disconnected from that. She highlighted many of the federal issues that were highlighted throughout the meeting; OVR's flat funding, the proposed TANF rules which could effect thousands of youth across the state, and she also noted that Congress had just proposed eliminating WIOA youth funding completely from the budget. She noted that thankfully, that did not pass but as long as we have a federally invested system, we are beholden to what they say. She again highlighted that having Governor Shapiro leading the way on workforce development investment is critical and noted that many of the investments highlighted from the agencies are not coming down to fund the PA CareerLink® centers besides Industry Partnerships and ApprenticeshipPA. She emphasized that they look to this Board to continue the strong partnership they have with the Association and the local boards and hope that the Board continues to engage with their conversations but also hope that the Board will listen and act. She noted that we can keep talking about all the state efforts going on, but it needs to lead to impactful change for the customer that we need to serve better and for the staff to do their jobs more effectively. She noted that the Association could use a champion in Pennsylvania to start advocating more on some of these issues with them and other organizations to say the investments matter. She noted that if the investments don't come, there is no fail safe at the state level and it will result in reduced services. She emphasized any changes in rules, regulations, funding, means that we will have to change the way we serve people in Pennsylvania. She noted that the next year is an opportunity to think differently about how we fund our system and serve our customers and at the end of the day, we need improved coordination across the state agencies so that local field staff can do their jobs better and serve our customers better. She ended by thanking Executive Director James Martini and Chair Shea Zwerver for allowing her the time to speak.

Chair Shea Zwerver thanked Carrie Amann and highlighted that PWDA has a workforce leader symposium happening in September which would be a great opportunity to be a part of those conversations.

Final Remarks & Adjournment:

Executive James Martini noted that at the next quarterly board meeting, they will have a presentation on the Trade Institute of Pittsburgh. He expressed his appreciation for everyone joining and thanked Shea for filling in as chair on short notice.

Chair Shea Zwerver thanked James Martini and expressed her appreciation at being able to fill in for Chair Terry Wiltout. She then sought a motion to adjourn the meeting.

MOTION: Matt Yarnell made the motion to adjourn and John "Ski" Sygielski seconded. It passed unanimously.

**Youth Committee
Quarterly Update
November 19, 2024**

Work of the Committee

The Youth Committee met on September 25th and engaged in discussion with Alicia Craddock from the PA Department of Labor and Industry and Deborah Harrison of PA CareerLink® Monroe County about youth experiences with the workforce development system in PA. They shared many positive examples of success including:

- Trellis for Tomorrow in which youth earn while they learn,
- the Summer Youth Program in which young people are paid wages like county employees but work in local non-profit agencies,
- Project Success where they learn all year long about different county jobs,
- career exploration camps that offer STEM and broadcasting experiences, and
- Youth Appreciation Day sponsored by the local Chamber to highlight the positive contributions of the emerging workforce.

The committee also discussed what they would like to pursue next, and some proposals included hearing about the Youth Engagement Specialists at PaTTAN (Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network) and exploring how the pandemic changed youth programming.

Chekemma Townsend, Chair
Youth Committee

**Industry Partnership and Employer Engagement Committee
Quarterly Update**

Nov. 19, 2024

Work of the Committee

The committee met twice during the last fiscal quarter.

At the August 21 meeting, the committee provided feedback on an employability certificate that was being developed by state staff in the Departments of Labor & Industry and Education. The committee will continue working with the state project team as that work further develops.

At the Oct. 16 meeting, the committee discussed how the workforce development system engages with employers and that feedback will be used by the PA Department of Labor & Industry to reexamine their workforce development employer engagement strategy.

A future topic to be discussed by the committee is how Artificial Intelligence does and may inform the workforce and employers throughout the Commonwealth.

The committee will meet on Dec. 18, 2024 at 2 p.m.

John J. "Ski" Sygielski, Ed.D., Chair

Industry Partnership and Employer Engagement Committee

Continuous Improvement of the PA CareerLink® Committee
Quarterly Update
November 19, 2024

The committee received a presentation on October 16th from by Crystal Houser, Director of the Bureau of Workforce Partnership and Operations of the PA Department of Labor & Industry. Discussion of the committee was focused on marketing of the PA CareerLink® system.

- L&I is looking to work with the committee on the next round of marketing for the system. Crystal shared a summary of the most recent marketing campaign.
- Committee discussed potential priority areas of focus on the next campaign, including:
 - Reviewing impact of previous campaign, including analysis of increased foot traffic and registrations during and after the campaign.
 - Ensuring that marketing efforts reach rural areas and smaller media markets in the Commonwealth.
 - Comparing information collected during digital intake at PA CareerLink® to help focus marketing efforts on most impactful ways that individuals are hearing about the system.
 - How to leverage not only what was learned during PA CareerLink® awareness days, but also how to build on the positive momentum generated.
 - Potentially developing a “tagline” or marketing slogan to tie all efforts together.
 - Leveraging local efforts and state efforts to ensure a unified strategy across the system.
- The committee is looking forward to continued collaboration with the PA Department of Labor & Industry on these efforts.

Brian Funkhouser, Chair
Continuous Improvement of the PA CareerLink® Committee

Apprenticeship and Career & Technical Education Committee
Quarterly Update
November 19, 2024

Work of the Committee

The committee's past discussions about barriers to accessing Career & Technical Education (CTE) highlighted several issues, including having geographic access to a Career & Technical Center and having local qualified staff to teach CTE. At the committee's September 17th meeting, a panel of educators from two Tioga County school districts shared their initiatives to bring CTE and registered apprenticeships to students despite not having a Career & Technical Center in the county. One district partnered with Penn College to integrate pre-apprenticeships with their current academic programming and is in the process of registering several apprenticeships, while the other is pursuing strategies such as virtual reality training, ladder certifications, a digital credential platform, and dual enrollment with Penn College.

The committee discussed how the state could support these types of initiatives in counties with similar distance, staffing, and funding challenges, and began a discussion about the potential of aligning pre-apprenticeships and CTE programs. Members noted the advantages to allowing students to try out work that could lead them to a career pathway, and to reflect on what they love to do, in addition to the practical benefits of merging processes so that CTE graduates can easily enter registered apprenticeships.

Also in September, the Keystone Research Center provided a research update to the committee on its analysis of the more than 1,500 registered apprenticeship programs in PA. A report is expected around the end of this month.

The committee's next meeting is Wednesday, November 20, at 2 p.m.

Angela Ferritto, Chair
Apprenticeship and CTE Committee

Agriculture Committee
Quarterly Update
November 19th, 2024

Work of the Committee

The Agriculture Committee met on October 1st, 2024 and had an informative presentation on AgConnect, an agriculture industry partnership based out of Chester County. The Committee learned about the many activities AgConnect supports and how AgConnect can also support farmers outside of Chester County. The Committee also had another discussion around what it would like to see happen with the H-2A/H-2B survey results and is considering a possible recommendation for the Board in the future.

The Committee plans to continue meeting bimonthly, with their next meeting scheduled for December 3rd at 12pm.

Brian Campbell, Chair
Agriculture Committee

Manufacturing Quarterly Update
November 19, 2024

Work of the Committee

The Manufacturing Committee has not been able to meet since our last Board Meeting but continues to be focused on sharing information and learning of available services.

Upon receiving approval for a central manufacturing resource repository, a team was created to begin work on this project. The team has been compiling current information, resulting in the creation of an extensive list thus far.

The committee continues to place emphasis on prioritizing the following areas of concentration:

- Attracting Talent
- Numeracy and Math Skills
- Transportation
- Childcare

The committee looks forward to continuing to meet with Departmental stakeholders and intends to engage with other WDB sub-committees to better understand what existing programs and initiatives are available and how our committee can best leverage those resources.

Mike Wojewodka, Chair
Manufacturing Committee

Education Shortage Committee
Quarterly Update
November 19, 2024

Education Shortage Committee Update

In the September meeting, chaired by Tim James, the Education Committee continued its work to address Pennsylvania's teacher shortage. Judd Pittman, Director of PDE's Bureau of Career & Technical Education, presented updates on key initiatives, including educator apprenticeships, the new Educator CIP Code allowing Career & Technical Centers to offer educator programs, and the expansion of the "Grow Your Own" initiative to support local talent. These initiatives are designed to streamline certification, expand early childhood education pathways, and create more accessible entry points into the teaching profession.

The committee focused on further refining its recruitment and retention strategies. In addition to continuing to hone recruitment recommendations, the committee deliberated on the creation of a centralized resource based on Kentucky's certification pathways, the expansion of work-based learning opportunities for diverse postsecondary students, and the creation of a Teach for Pennsylvania initiative to offer incentives to educators in underserved regions. The committee, which is still working to improve retention recommendations, stressed the value of statewide mentorship and induction programs, particularly in high-turnover areas, and a statewide teacher helpline to assist with certification and career counseling. Other topics of discussion were planning time, supporting teachers' well-being, and improving job quality by addressing workload.

Tim James is leaving the Workforce Development Board (WDB), therefore until a replacement chair is found, the committee's operations will be temporarily suspended. The committee would like to thank Tim for his contributions and leadership. The WDB is currently looking for a board member to fill the position of Chair, in order, to keep moving these crucial projects forward.

Potential action items in the near future:

- **Leadership Transition:** The WDB is seeking a board member interested in leading the committee's ongoing efforts to tackle Pennsylvania's educator shortages.
- **Engage Education and Workforce Leaders in Pennsylvania:** The committee will invite guest speakers to share insights on innovative programs and practices in teacher apprenticeships and certification pathways to strengthen our recommendations by incorporating proven strategies to address teacher shortages across the state.
- **Refining Recruitment and Retention Recommendations:** The committee will continue to "tweeze out" and refine specific recruitment and retention strategies to develop a comprehensive set of recommendations for submission to the WDB through thorough discussions to clarify, prioritize, and align proposed initiatives, ensuring they address Pennsylvania's critical educator shortages and align with the WDB's goals.

Tim James, Chair
Education Shortage Committee

Construction Workforce Committee
Quarterly Update
November 19, 2024

The Construction Workforce Committee most recently met on October 8, 2024. The main focus of the committee meeting was an outstanding presentation by committee member Erin O'Brien-Hofmann on the *Women in Nontraditional Careers* or "WINC" program, specifically WINC's Tradeswomen Readiness Program (TRP). WINC's TRP is an extremely successful, 6-week program that prepares women for building trades careers in construction, as well as manufacturing and several other related sectors. One of the TRP's many key elements of note, is its use of the Multi-craft Core Curriculum (MC3), just as the members saw in an earlier presentation on the *Apprentice Ready Program* by committee member Chis Spohn at our prior meeting in August.

As part of our outstanding discussion of these programs, members emphasized the importance of the MC3 and particularly, of the MC3 course in Construction Math, and noted how in their experience, many high school students are not proficient in practical math skills at a level necessary to succeed in trades apprenticeships or career opportunities. As a result, we expect to consider a recommendation specific to middle & high school math at our next committee meeting.

The Committee meets bimonthly, and our next meeting is on December 10, 2024 at 9 am, via Zoom.

Karen Masino, Chair
Construction Workforce Committee

Healthcare Workforce Committee
Quarterly Update
November 19, 2024

The Healthcare Workforce Committee most recently met on October 15, 2024. The Committee's primary business included our continued discussion of the collateral consequences of criminal convictions on employment in healthcare jobs. Members emphasized the importance of imposing appropriate consequences that protect the health and safety of vulnerable and care dependent patients, while also noting the importance of re-evaluating the many rules imposing employment consequences, periodically to ensure the consequences are appropriate, fair and reflect current views. Members also expressed the vital role healthcare sector employers, labor organizations, human resources experts and other key private sector partners should play in advising the state on these many rules and the state's plans for appropriate reforms. Members also recognized that this topic is expansive, crossing multiple state agencies and jurisdictions, and that there may be reform actions by state agencies that have been already completed, are underway or planned for the near future, therefore a vital step for the Committee would be to get a clear report from leadership in the administration on where things currently stand.

The Committee developed a recommendation to this effect, and I'm pleased to present this recommendation, which follows my report, to the Board for consideration and action.

The Healthcare Workforce Committee meets on a bi-monthly basis. Our next bi-monthly meeting is December 17, 2024 at 8:30 am via Zoom.

Matthew Yarnell, Chair
Healthcare Workforce Committee

Healthcare Workforce Committee Recommendation:

Many individuals with criminal conviction histories also face collateral consequences of their convictions, which limit or prohibit them from certain employment opportunities, particularly within the healthcare sector. A January 2021 report titled “*Pennsylvania Snapshot of Employment-Related Collateral Consequences*” issued by The Council of State Governments’ Justice Center and the National Reentry Resource Center, indicates healthcare, when combined with related facility care (adult care, nursing homes and residential care facilities) is the most impacted sector in terms of the number of employment-related collateral consequences imposed under Pennsylvania law, identifying about 120 rules that apply within healthcare. The report also notes that almost half of Pennsylvania’s employment-related collateral consequences are mandatory, and over 80% have an indefinite duration of effect.

The Committee agrees with the importance of proper safeguards and the need for reasonable consequences of certain offenses for healthcare occupations because of the vital and trusted role healthcare workers play in the care for vulnerable patients, residents, and consumers. Recognizing that some rule reforms may have already been undertaken, we also note that the state rules imposing these consequences should be periodically re-evaluated based on expert input from the industry, and rule changes made where appropriate.

Recommendation: The Workforce Development Board’s Healthcare Workforce Committee recommends that the Administration provide a report to the Board, on the PA rules imposing employment-related collateral consequences due to criminal histories for healthcare sector occupations, and that the report include the disposition of these rules, and the current status and plans for regulatory reforms completed, underway or to be initiated as appropriate. This effort should be conducted with the direct involvement of and be informed by experts in the healthcare sector representing labor, legal, human resources and other pertinent fields.

The Committee encourages the Administration to provide additional progress updates on this topic, to the Board and Committee chair, at future Board meetings.

HC-2024-4

[PennsylvaniaStateSnapshot \(csgjusticecenter.org\)](https://www.pennsylvania.gov/content/dam/csgjusticecenter.org)

[Welcome to the NICCC | National Inventory of Collateral Consequences of Criminal Conviction \(nationalreentryresourcecenter.org\)](https://www.niccc.org/)

<https://www.pa.gov/content/dam/copapwp-pagov/en/dos/resources/professional-licensing/ACT-53-Best-Practices-Guide.pdf>

**Reentry Committee
Quarterly Update
November 19th, 2024**

Work of the Committee:

In this last quarter, the Committee has engaged in multiple insightful conversations. In September, the Committee looked at a Second Chance Business Certification being given in Louisville, Kentucky. The Committee discussed what a certification like this would look like in Pennsylvania and discussed the many challenges with a certification like this. A main issue identified by Committee members is that some counties have stipulations in their county contracts that bar the hiring of reentrants. The Reentry Committee put forth the recommendation below highlighting the need for making government contracts less restrictive to support reentrants entering the workforce.

In October, the Committee was fortunate enough to hold a Panel on Diversion Methods with representatives from the Allegheny County Department of Human Services, the Allegheny County Courts, and a nonprofit known as Gwen's Girls. In the past, the Committee has mainly focused on how to assist those already incarcerated and those leaving correctional facilities. This panel allowed the Committee to begin thinking about how the State can be a service to individuals before they are incarcerated. A follow up conversation occurred at the November meeting, and the Committee agreed to make diversion methods another area of focus for the Committee.

Moving forward, the Committee plans to:

- Continue to hold presentations from subject matter experts where helpful to the Committee
- Meet with a sub-Committee focused on employer roundtables
- Continue addressing their identified priorities for 2024

Debra Caplan, Chair
Reentry Committee

Recommendation on Government Contracts & Reentrants

At the start of his term in January 2023, Governor Shapiro signed his first executive order; removing the requirement of a four-year degree for 92% of Commonwealth jobs and requiring a review of the other 8% of jobs¹. In doing so, Governor Shapiro eliminated the barrier of a degree for thousands of jobs in the State and made the Commonwealth an example for employers and counties across the State. As this Administration continues to build strategies for eliminating unnecessary barriers to employment, this Committee urges consideration to how it may eliminate barriers for those with criminal backgrounds seeking employment with companies receiving government contracts.

For reentrants across Pennsylvania, the presence of their criminal record serves as a significant barrier to employment long after their release. The Council of State Government's Justice Center's 2021 Report determined that nationally, 72% of local, state, and federal statutes and regulations (collateral consequences), impacted employment opportunities.² They also ascertained that these collateral consequences limit employment by restricting access to occupational and business licenses, and directly limiting the ability of employers to hire workers with convictions.³ Stipulations within government contracts about hiring individuals with criminal backgrounds can also significantly limit the employment opportunities for reentrants and can limit the growth of the employer, as well. In a study done by Kellogg and Northwestern University's Pritzker School of Law, researchers found that the turnover rate for employees with criminal records was 13% lower than employees without criminal records.⁴ They estimated that because of that lower turnover rate, companies could save around \$1,000 per year per position.⁵ An earlier study done by the Center for American Progress in 2014, found that the cost of employment losses among reentrants was as much as \$65 billion per year in terms of GDP.⁶ In 2021, the US Chamber reported a loss of \$78 billion-\$87 billion in GDP due to the exclusion of reentrants from the workforce.⁷ Ultimately, all of the research shows a real workforce need for reentrants in the workforce.

As the Pennsylvania Workforce Development Board continues to explore ways to increase career opportunities for individuals and eliminate unnecessary barriers to employment, the Reentry Committee recommends that the State review how it may help local areas to make their government contracts less restrictive for those with criminal backgrounds.

¹ [In his first executive order, Shapiro removes degree requirement for thousands of state jobs • Pennsylvania Capital-Star \(penncapital-star.com\)](#)

² [National Snapshot - CSG Justice Center](#)

³ Ibid

⁴ [Should You Hire Someone with a Criminal Record?](#)

⁵ Ibid

⁶ [VallasCriminalRecordsReport.pdf](#)

⁷ [The Business Case for Criminal Justice Reform: Second Chance Hiring | U.S. Chamber of Commerce](#)

Barrier Remediation Committee
Quarterly Update
November 19, 2024

Work of the Committee

The Barrier Remediation Committee has focused since July on WIOA Combined State Plan sub-goal 5.2, “Improve employment opportunity, workplace inclusion, and professional networking and mentoring opportunities for populations that experience stigma, bias, and discrimination. Expand on existing strategies and explore new approaches to reduce bias, from recruiting to hiring and employment.” The Committee approached this with a focus on workers with disabilities.

Over the summer and fall, the Committee learned from members and guests about the legal provision for subminimum wage for some workers with disabilities, about practices and business models of competitive integrated employment for workers with disabilities, and how one large employer of many workers with disabilities transitioned from a sheltered employment to a competitive integrated employment model. Through the fall, the Committee drafted and refined a set of recommendations, which are provided on the following pages for the Board’s consideration.

At the same time, looking toward 2025, the Committee has connected with two initiatives of the Commonwealth to learn about Pennsylvanians’ barriers to work: CODE PA’s research initiative to understand the workforce system customer’s digital experience, and the Department of Labor & Industry’s Unemployment Insurance Claimant Re-Engagement Project. From the latter project, which surveyed and interviewed over 5,000 people, the Committee learned the most common barriers to regaining employment (health concerns topped the list), the services that UI claimants said would help (training to change careers was #1), and other self-reported needs to return to work (most cited was flexible work location). These insights sparked many ideas about where to focus in the coming months and year.

The committee meets on the first Friday of each month at 11 a.m.

Shea Zwerver, Co-Chair
Barrier Remediation Committee

Barrier Remediation Committee Recommendation:

The Barrier Remediation Committee presents these recommendations on removing barriers to employment for individuals with a disability, including exploring ways to bolster and elevate competitive integrated employment (CIE).

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) [defines](#) competitive integrated employment (CIE) as work that is performed on a full-time or part-time basis for which an individual is:

- Compensated at or above minimum wage and comparable to the customary rate paid by the employer to employees without disabilities performing similar duties and with similar training and experience;
- Receiving the same level of benefits provided to other employees without disabilities in similar positions;
- At a location where the employee interacts with other individuals without disabilities; and
- Presented opportunities for advancement similar to other employees without disabilities in similar positions.

This supports [WIOA Combined State Plan](#) sub-goal 5.2 *to improve employment opportunity, workplace inclusion, and professional networking and mentoring opportunities for populations that experience stigma, bias, and discrimination. Expand on existing strategies and explore new approaches to reduce bias, from recruiting to hiring and employment.*

Formatting note: **bold font is the recommendation being made**; paragraph under the recommendation is a summary of what is currently happening to provide context and rationale for the recommendation.

- 1. Launch a public awareness campaign aimed at informing individuals with disabilities, their families, and employers about available programs and benefits—such as, but not limited to, Medical Assistance for Workers with Disabilities—generally, and especially during the transition to Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE) from a sheltered workplace and/or sub-minimum wage job. This effort should focus on alleviating concerns about potential loss of benefits and highlight resources that ensure continued support.**

Employers, disability advocates, and workers communicate that despite the availability of resources and information to support workers with disabilities, there is a gap in understanding of the breadth and depth of what is available for both employers and workers. A campaign effort that disseminates information on programs and benefits for workers with disabilities will help close this gap. Specifically, it will help educate employers about supporting and retaining their workers with disabilities, particularly through transitioning into CIE; it will also guide employers to share information about supportive services directly, or indirectly through their Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs), to their workers with disabilities, and their families.

There is currently an array of resources that can help support workers with disabilities, particularly as they transition into Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE). Many resources are available through Commonwealth agencies for example, The Department of Labor and Industry's Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR), Office of Developmental Programs, the Department of Treasury,

among others. Resources are also available through community and disability advocacy organizations. These resources address a wide array of topics including but not limited to:

- Career counseling and support for individuals with a disability transitioning from 14(c) employment into CIE;
- Maintaining benefits individuals are eligible for such as Medical Assistance for Workers with Disabilities (MAWD);
- Savings and financial stability such as [PA ABLE](#);
- Long-term services and supports for in home and community settings through the PA Department of Human Services' Home and community-Based Services (HCBS) Waivers;
- OVR's technical assistance offered to employers.

2. Take steps to facilitate employers' transition from sheltered workshops to competitive integrated employment (CIE), including consideration of tax credits and other incentives.

Currently, individuals with disabilities are a "target group" listed and applicable for the federal Workforce Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) which provides tax credit to companies and nonprofit organizations that *hire* individuals who face systemic challenges in finding and retaining employment. The state could create an additional tax credit that would go beyond the hiring and short-term retention of individuals with disabilities, and support employers as they transition their work environments, and adopt CIE.

3. Provide state-funded transitional support to bridge the gap between federal means-tested benefits and economic independence, to ensure that individuals with disabilities do not lose essential benefits when they are earning higher wages.

Surveys suggest that individuals with disabilities may be hesitant to seek and accept higher wages/increase in earnings, or more hours out of fear of losing essential benefits such as healthcare, housing, and income support, which undermines the Commonwealth's efforts to promote and transition to CIE models. There are existing programs and services that the Commonwealth can leverage, adjust, and increase to support a gradual and equitable transition to higher earnings without the risk of losing necessary services and benefits. Providing increased transitional support, such as in the form of increased access to benefits counseling, the Commonwealth can help create a more gradual and equitable transition for individuals with a disability whose earnings increase. By adjusting and increasing public programs that provide transitional support, like the Medical Assistance for Workers with Disabilities (MAWD), the Commonwealth can remove this barrier, empowering individuals with a disability to more fully participate in the workforce and achieve greater economic independence while employers could benefit from workplace outcomes such as increased productivity and morale.

4. Develop a multi-year phase out plan of 14 (c) that also includes ways to improve quality of employment for individuals with disabilities and supports employers in transitioning to CIE models.

Introduced federal legislation, the Transformation to Competitive Integrated Employment Act would phase out the payment of subminimum wages under Section 14(c) of the FLSA over a five-year period. This follows the recommendation of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, whose 2020

report, “Subminimum Wages: Impacts on the Civil Rights of People with Disabilities” concluded that “Congress should repeal Section 14(c) with a planned phase-out period to allow transition among service providers and people with disabilities to alternative service models prioritizing competitive integrated employment.” This recommendation would prepare the Commonwealth for the passing of such legislation if that happens first. Or, the state could proactively begin phasing out 14(c) in alignment with the growing number of states that have already officially phased out the use of Section 14 (c) subminimum wage certificates for workers with disabilities. Many state policies and executive actions are accompanied by measures to support the transition to competitive integrated employment (CIE), such as technical assistance that the OVR already offers.

A phase-out would allow transition among service providers and people with disabilities to alternative service models prioritizing competitive integrated employment. Other efforts could include creating a tiered approach for businesses/certificate holders to phasing out 14(c), such as gradually raising wages over time or setting firm deadlines for compliance with competitive wage standards. The state can maintain and encourage non-employment (sheltered workshops) programs for persons with significant disabilities who may not be able to transition to competitive employment.

- 5. Employers who receive workforce funding through state agencies (Department of Labor & Industry, Department of Aging, Department of Education, Department of Community and Economic Development, Department of Human Services) including competitive grants, formula funding, tax credits, or direct funding for the hiring or training of people with barriers to employment should participate in training that fosters inclusive practices, improves accessibility, and enhances understanding of the unique needs and strengths of individuals with disabilities in the workplace during the life of the funding period of performance.**

Despite the robust presence of state resources, it is not required for recipients of state workforce or employment funding—even if the scope of the funding project is primarily related to individuals with disabilities—to be educated about disability inclusion and prepare and ensure their workplace culture is going to be welcoming for individuals with disabilities.

Training could cover a range of topics, for example, fostering inclusive work environments, best practices for communicating with individuals with a disability, understanding the range and different types of disabilities, misconceptions about disabilities and unconscious bias. Training topics could be customized responsive to what employers say they need.

Such training could take several forms: for example, a standardized, recorded, or series of short trainings and videos with modules (similar to Workforce Staff Trainings). Another training model could be [Project Echo](#): training that brings together experts (such as HR professionals, accessibility specialists, etc.) and practitioners (employers) for a series of sessions that each include a brief lesson and a case-based approach to shared learning from experts and from one’s peers. Customized training to employers based on the employees hired with workforce funding is another possibility, since at time of hire, workers can self-identify as a member of a population with barriers to employment via the WOTC 8850 Form, and L&I certifies eligible WOTC recipients, which could trigger a customized training to be sent to that employer.

We recommend that training come from vetted sources such as OVR and other organizations that represent the perspective of people with disabilities, such as the Center for Long Term Living. It is important to note that supporting training efforts for disability inclusion also align strongly with OVRs goals within the broader WIOA state plan. Overarching goals include OVR suggesting recruitment processes for employers, targeting career ladders and pathways, and supporting workers' financial needs, unique aspirations, and talent succession, among others. Disability inclusion training can help facilitate meeting these goals.

Quarterly Meeting Agency Update

November 19, 2024

Agency: Labor & Industry Workforce

Apprenticeship and Training Office

New Sector Occupation Growth in Registered Apprenticeship: Between July 1 and September 30, 2024, the Pennsylvania Apprenticeship and Training Council (PATC) approved 10 registered apprenticeship programs in the healthcare, the building trades, education, technology, manufacturing, transportation, and other sectors. The programs that were reviewed and not approved were referred for additional consideration at a future council meeting. Some new sector occupations of note in newly approved programs include but are not limited to the following: Energy Specialist, Addictions Counselor, Central Sterile Processing technician, Electric Vehicle Automotive Technician, Special Education Paraprofessional, Well Capping Technician, etc.

\$3.9 Million in Pre-Apprenticeship Opportunities for Pennsylvania High School Students: On September 30, 2024, the awardees of the PAsmart Career & Technical Education Pre-Apprenticeships Grant Program were announced. Through 9 projects, this grant opportunity initiative makes a \$3.9 million investment in career development for Pennsylvania's high school students through pre-apprenticeship opportunities offered by career and technical education (CTE) programs that are run by a school district, employer, community non-profit or economic development organization.

More Than \$5 Million to Expand Registered Apprenticeship Programs Across PA: In September 2024, the Apprenticeship and Training Office announced the awardees of the PAsmart Pathway Innovations to Registered Apprenticeships Grant Program. Nearly \$5.4 million was awarded to support the creation and expansion of registered apprenticeship programs through 10 projects covering varying sectors and occupations including Cyber Security, healthcare, Early childhood education, agriculture, and advanced manufacturing.

Bureau of Workforce Development Administration

Veterans Employment Grant - Delaware: The Department of Labor & Industry (L&I) Secretary Nancy A. Walker announced \$400,000 in funding has been awarded to the Delaware Workforce Development Board to connect veterans with job opportunities and employment support in Delaware county. The Veterans Employment Program (VEP) initiative is designed to help veterans, members of all Reserves units and the Pennsylvania National Guard, and spouses of veterans and service members translate their military skills to civilian life.

Workforce Engagement and HR Support for Farms & Agribusiness: The PA Department of Labor & Industry (L&I) has created this grant opportunity to select a service provider to assist the department with the creation and administration of a capacity-building program that provides workforce development (WD) and human resources (HR) support to small- and mid-sized farms and agribusinesses. The overarching purpose of this grant is to help PA farms and agribusinesses avoid future closure and layoffs by assisting them in recruiting the workforce needed to stably maintain operations and building an administrative foundation for future success, while also providing job opportunities for dislocated workers. The amount of funding available will ultimately be determined based upon the needs of the awarded project subject

to the amount of available funds. L&I is seeking innovative applications that build upon the applicant's subject matter expertise and knowledge of the agricultural sector.

The application deadline for this grant opportunity is Monday, December 2, 2024, at 11:59 p.m. E.T.

Veteran Employment Program (VEP): The PA Department of Labor & Industry (L&I) announced the availability of approximately \$600,000 in funding for the Veterans Employment Program (VEP PY24) for veterans and eligible spouses to allow for a holistic approach in reaching veteran employment goals. Grant awards will be competitively awarded up to \$200,000 each. Veterans Employment Program (VEP) funding provides Pennsylvania veterans and their spouses with services to address barriers to employment. Many government programs and community initiatives already partner collaboratively to work with veterans. VEP funding can provide resources to implement new ideas and concepts, fill funding gaps, or supplement existing initiatives to provide more comprehensive services for Pennsylvania veterans to improve their employment outcomes.

Recovery Coach Education Series: The Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry (L&I) announced the launch of the "Recovery Coach Workforce Education Series," a partnership with the Program Evaluation and Research Unit (PERU) at the University of Pittsburgh School of Pharmacy, to address workforce challenges stemming from the opioid crisis. This initiative is part of L&I's broader strategy to address the opioid crisis's impact on Pennsylvania's workforce, which includes developing the healthcare workforce, providing employment support at different stages of recovery, and helping employers support those in recovery. The comprehensive five-part virtual training series is designed for care coordinators and professionals working in treatment and recovery services. The program will prepare participants with evidence-based strategies to integrate employment services into the recovery process.

Recently Published Policy: WIOA Regional and Local Area Plans were published on September 11, 2024. Regional plans must articulate how the respective planning region local boards will collaboratively achieve WIOA's vision and goals, support and incorporate Pennsylvania's WIOA Combined State Plan goals and strategies while realizing regional goals and strategies. Each local board, in collaboration with local area stakeholders, must produce a local area plan that embodies the vision, goals, objectives and strategies of WIOA, the PA WIOA Combined State Plan as well as certain administrative and operational elements or processes.

Bureau of Workforce Partnership & Operations

PA CareerLink® Awareness Days 2024: PA CareerLink® Awareness Days were held between August 20 and September 13. These events are a unified effort to serve our employer and job seeker customers and to raise awareness for the programs, services and resources available at PA CareerLink®. This year there were 64 events held across the state and were comprised of job fairs, resource fairs, employer engagements and ribbon cuttings. We had amazing participation from communities this year: 653 employers attended, 399 community organizations and 4867 attendees.

Business Services Phase I Assessment: To identify that all opportunities to build and maintain employer partnerships with PA CareerLink®, the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry's (DLI) Bureau of Workforce Partnership and Operations (BWPO) requested a systemwide review of the employer engagement practices utilized by PA CareerLink® offices. Through Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDB) and PA CareerLink® locations across the Commonwealth, Business Service Teams (BSTs) strive to enhance the community and economic strength of the area it serves by partnering with businesses, community and economic development organizations, and educational institutions. The evaluation

included business services staff interviews, an employer survey, and a review of services provided to and available for employers. The results of the evaluation were released and presented to local workforce development areas. More conversations are planned to discuss results and initiatives are being developed to engage employers that are unaware of PA CareerLink® services.

Center for Workforce Information & Analysis

WIOA Annual Performance Report: Program Year (PY) 2023 WIOA Annual Performance Reports were submitted and accepted at the end of September. Pennsylvania exceeded all unadjusted performance goals for PY2023. Overall participation in WIOA Title I and III programs increased from last year, led by Wagner-Peyser. Title I levels remained essentially unchanged. A smaller portion of individuals served in PY2023 had a barrier to employment than prior years. Most decreases were negligible, indicating the proportion served had remained relatively stable. Two barrier measures did see increases of more than a percentage point over the year - Individuals with a Disability and English Language Learners, Low Levels of Literacy, and Cultural Barriers. Lastly, negotiations to establish state and local Workforce Development Area goals for PY2024 and PY2025 were also successfully completed.

Workforce Information Forum: Building on the success of past events, CWIA partnered with the Delaware County Workforce Development Board to host a Workforce Information Forum to showcase labor market information (LMI) and highlight available tools/services. The Forum, held October 16-17 at the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) 3729 building in Boothwyn, was targeted to helping workforce staff, economic developers, and educators understand basic LMI data and to utilize it when serving their customers. Approximately 110 attendees participated in the two-day event. Similar events are being planned in 2025.

Quarterly Meeting Agency Update

November 19, 2024

Agency: PA Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR)

EMPLOYMENT OUTCOME STATISTICS

The following employment outcomes were achieved as of November 2024 for Vocational Rehabilitation Programs:

Program	Goal for the Program Year (PY 2024-25)	# of Successful Closures to Date (10/28/2024)	% of Goal Achieved for the PY 2024-25
BVRS	4,770	2,229	47%
BBVS VR Program	230	63	17%

Nationally, it is a concerning time for the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Program. In FFY24 the national VR program was flat funded resulting in Pennsylvania losing out in \$12.8M in federal funds. For FFY25, the national VR program is slated to be flat funded again which will result in an estimated loss of an additional \$15M in federal funds based on the established formula. Compounding the issue, OVR continues to see increases across all of our programs, in individuals seeking services, and the cost to provide services. PA OVR is working to address these anticipated funding reductions and is working to reprioritize and reimagine how services are provided to be able to accommodate the reduction in federal funds while continuing to serve as many Pennsylvanians with disabilities as possible.

OVR asked for, and received approval from, the Pennsylvania Rehabilitation Council on August 15, 2024, and the Pennsylvania State Board of VR on September 12, 2024, to investigate reinstating the Order of Selection (OOS), update the definitions of the priority categories, and give priority to customers at immediate risk of losing their employment. To reimplement the OOS an amendment to the VR portion of the State Plan will be necessary. Public meetings were held on the State Plan in October and OVR is seeking PA Rehabilitation Council and VR State Board approval by the middle of December which will then be submitted to RSA for review and approval by the end of the year with reimplementing of the OOS following their approval in early 2025. When/if approved, additional information will be communicated to customers and stakeholders.

Upon final approval from RSA:

- OVR will close the Significant Disability (SD) and Non-Significant Disability (NSD) categories and establish a waitlist for those categories to prioritize services to the Most Significant Disability (MSD) category, with a target date of no later than February 2025. OVR will continue to monitor the fiscal outlook on an ongoing basis and will reserve the option to also close the MSD category if determined fiscally necessary.
- With the addition of definition changes to MSD and SD, once RSA approves, PA OVR will work to make appropriate system updates and train staff with a target date of implementing the definition changes at the start of the PY25 (July 1, 2025). As part of the definition changes, the NSD category will be renamed as: All Other Disabilities (D).

Bureau of Juvenile Justice Services (BJJS)/PA Academic, Career & Technical Training (PACTT)

The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) and BJJS entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in May 2017 with the current MOU being in effect until June 2026. In 2014, The PACTT Alliance became a part of BJJS. Currently there are 72 PACTT affiliates with additional affiliates in process. Internal OVR staff are available to provide Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) and accept referrals for VR Services. For all four quarters of SFY 2023-2024, OVR spent \$1,416,522.81, and invoiced PACTT a total of \$300,000 for services provided. During quarter one of SFY 2024-2025, OVR spent \$692,795.56, and invoiced PACTT a total of \$147,565.35.

Michael Vore and Brett Glavey are the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Specialists overseeing OVR's role in PACTT programming statewide. In this role, the Specialists provide technical assistance to OVR staff, PACTT partners, PACTT affiliates, and complete reporting to BJJS. In November 2024, the Specialists and PACTT Regional Consultants will be presenting on the OVR and BJJS/PACTT partnership at 2024 James E. Anderson Conference on Juvenile Justice, an event for juvenile court judges, juvenile probation officers, service providers, and juvenile justice system stakeholders. For additional information please reach out to Brett Glavey (bglavey@pa.gov) or Michael Vore (mvore@pa.gov).

Summer Programs

MY Work (MY = Municipalities + Youth)

The MY Work is a summer employment program created by OVR to provide high school students with disabilities the chance to work within their local municipalities. Piloted in nine municipalities throughout Allegheny County in 2016, MY Work established a collaboration between OVR, local education agencies, local government, and non-profit organizations, providing paid work experiences for 50 high school students. This summer, OVR placed 1214 students with disabilities at 165 worksites across 58 Pennsylvania counties up from 853 students the prior year. OVR covers the program's wages for all student workers, with no cost to the municipality. Additionally, OVR has developed work readiness guidance that includes soft skills training and interview preparation to assist the participants in a variety of fields, including beautification projects, children's programming, and customer service.

Working with municipalities, non-profits, and other employers allows OVR to spread its message and services across a wide geographical area, reaching both urban and rural communities. These partnerships provide a platform for OVR to build relationships with local government agencies, employers, and community organizations, raising awareness of OVR's mission to support employment for individuals with disabilities. This broad network of partnerships helps ensure that people in even the most remote areas of the state know about the opportunities available to individuals with disabilities through OVR programs.

PA Outdoor Corps

OVR and the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) entered into an MOU to increase opportunities for High School students and 18-25 aged youth to participate in paid work experiences in PA State Parks and DCNR managed State Forests, through the PA DCNR Outdoor Corps. This has developed into a highly successful seasonal employment opportunity with two programs consisting of a 6-week Summer Youth Program for high school students and nine-month Young Adult Crews consisting of a crew leader and five crew members ages 18-25. These are summer seasonal positions and offer paid work experience of \$15.00/hr., skills training, professional development, and environmental education experiences to provide hands-on experience and expose participants to a variety of professionals, career paths while working to complete recreation and conservation projects on PA's public lands.

Opportunities for Youth crews were available at the following locations between July-August in 2024: Altoona, Bradford, Chambersburg, Erie, Greensburg, Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh ASL, Hazleton, Harrisburg, Reading, Ridgeway, Wilkes-Barre, Williamsport, Wellsboro, York. The program includes an American Sign Language Youth Crew, and typically sees 10-12 High School participants each season. OVR anticipates supporting 10 high school students and ASL Youth Crew for the upcoming 2025 program. Projects vary amongst crews and locations, including conservation work such as trail maintenance, plantings, invasive species control, and work on pavilions, cabins, and offices. The Outdoor Corps. provides a supportive emphasis on personal and professional growth of youth crew members and will engage students with various environmental education and recreational learning opportunities.

The Outdoor Corps. offered Young Adult Crews at the following locations between March-November in 2024: Altoona, Dubois, Harrisburg, Meadville, Norristown, Pittsburgh, Somerset, Wilkes-Barre, and Williamsport. These crews work full-time Monday through Thursday and offer paid time off, optional benefits, and are a gateway to professional training, development, and growth opportunities.

INVEST PROJECT

OVR has continued meeting expectations in carrying out the Subminimum Wage to Competitive Integrated Employment (SWTCIE) Grant, InVEST (Integrated Vocational Engagement & Support Team) Project. The InVEST Project has three primary components: CIE Engagement, focused on engaging individuals with disabilities and their families; CIE Service/Resource Coordination, focused on creating an integrated resource team to identify and deliver necessary supports and services to support CIE; and CIE Supports, focused on supporting the needs of a business and the needs of workers with disabilities.

Current data on referrals and enrollments:

- 35 individuals have registered as interested in InVEST through the InVEST website/Form.
- 250 individuals referred from Section 511 with open cases since 10/1/22 are now being tracked as "SWTCIE Participants" in CWDS.
- 5 SWTCIE Participants have achieved Competitive Integrated Employment and have been closed successfully.
- 4 SWTCIE Participants are currently employed in Competitive Integrated Employment.
- 18 individuals/families are being mentored by PA Family Network
- Two integrated resource teams have been initiated with support from Achieva.

Under the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) executed with ODP:

- University of Missouri-Kansas City (UMKC) has been vetted for the ITQ Contract for Training & Technical Assistance on Charting the LifeCourse™ (CtLC) Framework and an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) will be established to fund services for both the SWTCIE and the Pathways to Partnership Grants. PA Team is meeting regularly with UMKC team to develop strategic plan for DHS, DLI, PDE/BSE.
- CIE Engagement through InVEST Family Advisors has been initiated. Six of seven InVEST Family Advisors are being onboarded by PA Family Network and the ODP Grant Liaison, E. Renea Snyder.
- PA Family Network Family Advisors have been mentoring 18 individuals and their families to develop their LifeCourse portfolios.

A comprehensive outreach and marketing plan has been implemented including videos, pamphlets, mass mailings, social media, and website development.

- Section 511 Success Stories- YouTube links
 - **Andrew:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eCh-26AFC2U>
 - **Maggy:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sx31IABWa0E>
 - **John:** https://youtu.be/1_Jzq77Sd7A
 - **Pat:** <https://youtu.be/u85uF7Uu6Pg/>

Training & Technical Assistance has been initiated with National Disability Institute (NDI) for the implementation of Integrated Resource Teams (IRT). Statewide IRT training is being developed for OVR staff. Project Evaluation activities continue to be developed in collaboration with Temple University Institute on Disabilities and the national evaluator, Mathematica. CWDS has been modified to collect data specific to the grant and additional modifications are in development.

Contracts have been fully executed with Achieva and KenCrest/Community Integrated Services to deliver primary grant services in the western and eastern halves of the state respectively.

- Achieva/Sheetz:
 - Press Release announcing the partnership with Sheetz and Achieva in West has been released.
 - The Inclusion Liaison position has been filled and begins onboarding on Monday, 10/21/24.
 - Qualified candidates for the Embedded Employment Support Specialist positions are being interviewed jointly by Sheetz and Achieva.
 - Three customized positions have been created and potential candidates are being considered for placement with additional accommodations to be made.
- KenCrest/Community Integrated Services/Business Partner-TBD
 - Efforts to identify business partner in the East have commenced in collaboration with OVR Regional Business Services representatives as well as those from the Philadelphia and Norristown District Offices.
 - Several promising leads are currently being vetted.

PATHWAY TO PARTNERSHIP GRANT

The Pathways to Partnership (P2P) Disability Innovation Fund (DIF) Grant has concluded its first year of implementation which focused on program development, composing memorandums of understandings (MOUs), forming, and meeting with the advisory committee and gathering the baseline information of the goals. The goal of the Pathways to Partnerships grant program will offer professional development opportunities for a diverse group of stakeholders and agencies, expand community-based instruction and work-based learning experience opportunities, and comprehensive transition systems planning. A key milestone of the first year of Pathways to Partnership was the successful kickoff of the Charting the LifeCourse training initiative, which provided essential professional development for stakeholders across the state. The grant continues to engage individuals with disabilities, their support networks, employers, and staff from the OVR, Office of Developmental Programs (ODP), Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE), PaTTAN, LEAs, IUs, and Centers for Independent Living (CILs), further strengthening the collaboration needed to achieve its long-term goals.

Year two of the Pathways to Partnership (PTP) grant kicked off on October 1, 2024, with several key objectives.

1. All agreements and participant surveys are being finalized to begin grant services.
2. Coordination with University of Missouri-Kansas City (UMKC) for Charting the LifeCourse (CtLC) is beginning to schedule trainings for 2025 and 2026.
3. Both Charting the LifeCourse (CtLC) and additional transition planning trainings will be posted on the PaTTAN website, with efforts underway to secure CRC credits.
4. Baseline data collection for program evaluation with PSU is being initiated, and a data-sharing schedule with Mathematica is being established to evaluate program activities.
5. Programming is targeted to begin in all 29 IUs to implement a transition systems intervention.
6. Sixteen LEAs will be selected to participate in Community-Based Instruction (CBI) and Work-Based Learning Experiences (WBLE) in year three of P2P.

For any additional information, please reach out to the Pathways to Partnership co-directors Mara Wolfe marawolfe@pa.gov or Hillary Hubbell hhubbell@pa.gov.

COMMONWEALTH TECHNICAL INSTITUTE at the HIRAM G. ANDREWS CENTER

The Hiram G. Andrews Center (HGAC) recently announced the launch of a new Early Childhood Education diploma program designed to prepare students for careers in early childhood education and care. The 12-month program, starting in January 2025, will provide students with comprehensive training in early childhood development, health and safety, curriculum planning, and practical experience working with young children. The program includes 45 semester credit hours, including over 480 hours of practical experience. Graduates that complete the program will be prepared for the nationally recognized Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential and qualified for PA Early Childhood Career Pathway entry-level careers, including positions as childcare aides, special education aides, Early Head Start teachers, and PA Pre-K Counts teacher assistants.

The Early Childhood Education program is open to individuals with a high school diploma or GED. Prospective students must pass a criminal background check and meet health requirements. Prospective students, their teachers and families are always invited to tour the HGAC/CTI campus. Schedule a tour or inquire about applying for admission by calling 1-800-762-4211 or 814-255-8200. [Information is available on L&I's website.](#)

In June, OVR/HGAC applied for an additional \$10M in grant funding in association with the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) Disability Innovation Fund (DIF) - Creating a 21st Century Workforce of Youth and Adults with Disabilities through Transformation of Education, Career and Competitive Integrated Employment. Unfortunately, PA OVR was not selected.

Quarterly Meeting Agency Update

November 19, 2024

Agency: Department of Education

Educator Workforce

In 2022, PDE developed a career and technical education (CTE) Program of Study in Education to encourage high school students to engage with and enter the educator profession. Approved Programs of Study qualify for federal Perkins funding. School districts, charter schools, and career and technology centers first begin offering the Program of Study in Education in SY 2023-24. As of the SY 2024-25, there are a total of 25 approved programs in 21 counties.

Career Ready PA Coalition

The Career Ready PA Coalition will launch the 2024-25 sessions on November 21, featuring the Manufacturers Resource Center (Career Ready PA Regions 7, 8) and the popular “What’s So Cool About Manufacturing” career readiness contest. Prior to the session, PDE will be providing training in Career Ready PA Stakeholder Forums: Partnerships to Pathways—Employability Skills in the Classroom designed to assist districts in strengthening new and existing workforce to classroom career pathway connections on November 1, 8, and 18.

Title II Adult Education

Staff from the Title II Integrated Education and Training Technical Assistance Project are working with teams of local adult education providers to expand integrated education and training activities.

Libraries

PA CareerLink® and libraries have long worked together to provide cohesive workforce development opportunities and provide patron referrals for services. [A brief overview of PA CareerLink® services](#) is now available on [PA Library Staff Academy](#). The Office of Commonwealth Libraries is working towards improving training for digital navigator services being provided by libraries to promote and improve digital literacy for the workforce.

Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL)

Early Childhood Education Summit – OCDEL staff participated in and facilitated sessions at the PA Child Care Association’s Early Childhood Education Summit in State College Oct. 18-19.

Infant Mental Health Professional Development – OCDEL is offering an opportunity for Pennsylvania licensed child care providers, Head Start/Early Head Start, and Pa Pre-K Counts programs to participate in the University of Pittsburgh Infant Mental Health professional development certificate at no cost through a pilot program offering scholarships to professionals serving children and families in prenatal, infant, toddler, and preschool programs.

New Leader Chats – Beginning in November, OCDEL’s Early Intervention technical assistance partner started hosting a series of one-hour networking opportunities where new Infant Toddler and Preschool

Early Intervention (EI) directors can discuss EI procedures, processes, current topics, and resources important to the operation of programming for infants, toddlers, and preschool children with disabilities and their families. Sessions will be held in November, January, March and May.

Quarterly Meeting Agency Update

November 19, 2024

Agency: Department of Human Services (DHS)

Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL)

Early Childhood Education Summit

OCDEL staff participated in and facilitated sessions at Pennsylvania Child Care Association's (PACCA) Early Childhood Education Summit in State College. Of note was a town hall session featuring OCDEL's Deputy Secretary and Bureau Directors.

Continuous Quality Improvement Awards

In August, OCDEL released the 2024-2025 Keystone STARS Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Awards. DHS certified child care providers are eligible for a CQI Award amount based on provider type, licensed capacity, and Keystone STAR designation. Providers can use CQI Award funds for staff qualifications and professional development and leadership and management, among other categories. Award funds can be applied to eligible expenses incurred from July 1, 2024 through February 28, 2025.

Infant Mental Health Professional Development

OCDEL is offering an opportunity for Pennsylvania licensed child care providers, Head Start/Early Head Start, and PA Pre-K Counts programs to participate in the University of Pittsburgh Infant Mental Health professional development certificate at no cost through a pilot program offering scholarships to professionals serving children and families in prenatal, infant, toddler, and preschool programs. The application is currently open and closes November 15, 2024.

New Leader Chats

Beginning in November, OCDEL's Early Intervention technical assistance partner, EITA, will host a series of one-hour networking opportunities where new Infant Toddler and Preschool Early Intervention (EI) directors can discuss EI procedures, processes, current topics, and resources important to the operation of programming for infants, toddlers, and preschool children with disabilities and their families. Sessions will be held in November, January, March, and May.

Office of Children, Youth, and Families (OCYF)

Caseworker Recruitment and Retention Study

In August, OCYF convened the first meeting of the Recruitment and Retention Workgroup. This workgroup is a collaboration between OCYF and county children and youth agencies (CCYAs), along with other stakeholders, following the statewide study on child welfare recruitment and retention ([Caseworker Recruitment and Retention Study](#)). The workgroup is expected to:

- Produce or advance work products related to the recommendations from the Caseworker Recruitment and Retention Study.
- Work with strategic partners to share information and coordinate action and messaging.
- Develop a structure for continuing to monitor recruitment and retention statistics throughout the life of the workgroup and in years to come.

- Provide research to support counties in implementing recommendations stemming from the Caseworker Recruitment and Retention Study.

At the end of November, the OCYF Deputy Secretary and county representatives will provide a presentation to the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania regarding the findings from the Caseworker Recruitment and Retention Study.

Office of Developmental Programs (ODP)

National Disability Employment Awareness Month Activities

As part of National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM), ODP staff presented at PA ABLE’s Day of Learning about Disability Employment Awareness Month on October 1, 2024. ODP staff partnered with Office of Long-Term Living (OLTL) staff to discuss employment services offered by ODP and OLTL. ODP staff also partnered with the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) to hold Virtual Office Hours for individuals and families on October 2, 2024 where an overview of the employment services available through ODP and OVR were provided as well as current initiatives aimed to assist individuals to discover, obtain, and maintain meaningful competitive integrated employment in their community.

Performance-Based Contracting and Waiver Amendments for the Consolidated and Community Living Waivers

On September 26, 2024, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) approved ODP’s 1915(b)(4) Selective Contracting Waiver application along with the amendments to the Consolidated and Community Living 1915(c) waivers to implement Performance-Based Contracting for residential services. The effective date of these waivers will be January 1, 2025. ODP also published bulletin 00-24-01, Performance Standards for Residential Services in July 2024 and included the performance standards that were developed to improve the quality of services including staff credentialing for direct support professionals and front-line supervisors.

Office of Income Maintenance (OIM)

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Job Experience and/or Training Services (JETS)

The Request for Application (RFA) process for SNAP 50/50 programs has concluded. Renamed SNAP JETS, the current SNAP 50/50 grants will end as of December 31, 2024 and the new JETS grants will begin January 1, 2025. We look forward to sharing additional information in the very near future.

2024-25 Able-Bodied Adult Workers Without Dependents (ABAWD) Waivers Approved

The Department received approval from Food Nutrition Services (FNS) for a partial Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWD) waiver. Work requirements for ABAWDs are waived statewide until May 31, 2025. Below are the following municipalities and counties where ABAWD work requirement will take effect on June 1, 2025:

Unwaived Municipalities	Unwaived Counties
Cranberry Township (in Butler County) Hampden Township (in Cumberland County)	Adams, Centre, Chester, Lancaster (NOTE: Lancaster City is waived), Lebanon County (NOTE: Lebanon City is waived), Montgomery County (NOTE: Norristown is waived), York (NOTE: York

	City, York Township, and Springettsbury Township are waived)
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Employment and Training (E&T) programs, including SNAP EARN, SNAP KEYS, SNAP JETS, and WIOA programs help ABAWDs meet their work requirements.

AmeriCorps Income

As of October 10, 2024 all AmeriCorps stipends will now be considered excluded income for all programs except for SNAP. SNAP policy has separate rules for the treatment of AmeriCorps stipends. Please see SNAP Handbook chapter 550.514, Titles I and II of the 1973 Domestic Volunteer Services Act.

Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (OMHSAS)

MyOMHSAS

In May 2024, the Bureau of Policy, Planning, and Program Development (BPPPD) announced the launch of MyOMHSAS as the OMHSAS-wide online enterprise learning management system (eLMS) at <https://www.myomhsas.org>. MyOMHSAS was designed and developed in partnership with the Office of Developmental Programs (ODP) and the University of Massachusetts (UMass), to offer asynchronous on-demand training modules, resources, and communications tailored to behavioral health topics. MyOMHSAS content is intended for internal and external stakeholders including members of the public, service providers, and OMHSAS staff. MyOMHSAS will house numerous training resources to assist the behavioral health workforce. Currently, OMHSAS is prioritizing the development of a 20-module Crisis Worker Certificate in partnership with Temple University that will provide a pathway for entry-level crisis workers to complete the majority of training required to work in the Crisis System. Five of the crisis-related modules are available, and formal launch of the certificate option when the remaining training modules are completed is expected within the next year. Efforts are also underway to migrate and upgrade existing Basic Case Management and Child Case Management training modules to the MyOMHSAS platform to enhance the training of the case management workforce.

OMHSAS/DOC Re-Entry Bridge Program for Returning Citizen Peers

OMHSAS is proud to be partnering with the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections (DOC), Temple University, Pennsylvania Peer Support Coalition (PaPSC), Pennsylvania Mental Health Consumers Association (PMHCA), and other peer services stakeholder groups to assist Certified Peer Specialists (CPS) returning to the community following an incarceration. The program will provide training and mentoring to returning citizen CPSs to assist them in finding employment as a CPS, to both aid in their own success reintegrating into the community and to expand the pool of available peers needed to meet increasing behavioral health service demands.

Quarterly Meeting Agency Update

November 19, 2024

Agency: Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED)

DCED Workforce Development Programming

- **Workforce & Economic Development Network of Pennsylvania (WEDnet):** In late 2023, the WEDnetPA program began completely overhauling the legacy ISAAC system that accepts employer applications, determines eligibility and manages invoicing for the program. The legacy system was in use for nearly 15 years. In December 2024, WEDnetPA's ISAAC 2.0 will begin accepting inquiries and applications for \$8M in available funding for fiscal year 24/25. In January 2025, the first invoices will be processed. ISAAC 2.0 is built on a Salesforce platform that is free from performance issues and streamlined to make the process easier for employers.
- A new logo, new [website](#) and the implementation of ISAAC 2.0 in 2024 are major improvements to a program celebrating 25 years of successfully working with thousands of companies to provide funding to upskill Pennsylvania's workforce.
- **Manufacturing Training to Career:** The Training to Career grant received funding in the FY24-25 budget in the amount of \$4.7 million. To date this fiscal year, 15 awards have been made for a total of \$2.5 million. Of the 15 awards, seven projects are short-term training focused and eight are awareness focused.
 - **Awareness** – Projects supporting the advancement of the manufacturing industry through the engagement of youth or those with barriers to employment in awareness building activities related to career opportunities in manufacturing.
 - **Training** – Projects resulting in short-term work-readiness training that lead to entry-level job placement for individuals with barriers to employment. These projects work collaboratively with local manufacturers to identify and teach missing essential skills for entry level applicants for existing or near future open positions.
- **Foundations in Industry Training (FIT) Grant Program:** The FY24-25 funded the FIT program at \$3 million. Nine projects have been funded for a total of \$1.3 M.

Young, Smart & Local Conference: DCED presented at the Young, Smart & Local Conference, held in Philadelphia on November 12th. Young, Smart & Local is a national network of communities working to build a diverse workforce through the engagement and retention of young professionals, share best practices in attraction and retention programs and facilitate professional development opportunities to further grow and foster a diverse workforce. Launched in 2019, this network includes more than 1,000 professionals in economic development, city government, higher education, and business.

Pennsylvania Broadband Development Authority: The PA Broadband Development Authority (PBDA) continues to actively develop grant opportunities through collaboration and promotion of the broadband and digital equity efforts across Pennsylvania.

Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD Program-Period 1) Application Update:

- The application window for BEAD's \$1.16 billion funding opens this fall, with guidelines approved on September 19, 2024. The detailed guidelines and information on Broadband Serviceable Areas (BSAs) are available on the PBDA BEAD Program Page.
- Key dates include:
 - September 2024: Preliminary BSAs established; guidelines and resources posted.
 - October 2024: Final BEAD eligible locations announced; Period 1 applications open.
 - December 2024: Period 1 applications close.
 - January 2025: Period 1 application review.
 - February 2025: Period 1 provisional awards announced; Period 2 applications open.
 - April 2025: Period 2 applications close.
 - May 2025: Period 2 provisional awards announced; draft of Final Proposal.

This initiative will significantly enhance digital connectivity across the state, promoting economic growth and community development. *Broadband Serviceable Areas (BSA's) are Pennsylvania areas with one or more Census Block Groups containing eligible Broadband Serviceable Locations (BSLs).

Funding Programs:

- **Capital Projects Fund – Broadband Infrastructure Program:** This \$200 million competitive grant program was designed to target locations that do not currently have access to 25/3 Mbps reliable service. The program will fund extensions of existing last-mile cable modem and fiber-to-the-premise broadband networks. PBDA presented the final project determinations at the April 18, 2024, Board meeting, which were unanimously approved. This program will award \$204 million across 53 unique applications serving over 40,000 unserved/underserved Broadband Serviceable Locations (BSLs) across the Commonwealth.
- **CPF – Multi-Purpose Community Facilities (Facilities) Program:** We are reviewing applications for the \$45 million Facilities grant program for community anchor institutions and local governments. Awards are expected in October. Thank you for your patience. For updates, visit the Multi-Purpose Community Facilities Program Page.
- **CPF – Digital Connectivity Technology Program:** The \$20 million Technology grant program, designed to provide laptops to eligible entities, closed its application window on August 19. We received a total of 135 applications, which are currently under review. For more details and updates, please visit the Digital Connectivity Technology Program page.

Interagency Collaborations:

- **Department of Aging:** Will be working with the Department of Aging and WVIA to expand some programming statewide around Careers that Work and a regional spotlight series.
- **HIRE – Apprenticeship Sub-Committee:** Earlier this year, Governor Shapiro signed Executive Order 2024-01 – Hire, Improve, Recruit, Empower (HIRE) Committee which is aimed to improve the recruitment, hiring, and retention of top talent. As part of this initiative, OA established an Apprenticeship Sub-Committee which will champion the expansion and implementation of apprenticeship programs within the Commonwealth. DCED serves as a member of the sub-committee.
- **Empowerment Collaborative:** DCED continues to participate on an interagency collaboration to help increase student employment in the Appalachian communities. The Collaborative is hosting a multi-state kickoff at Adventures on the Gorge in Fayette County, WV on November 21-22,

2024. This will provide an exciting opportunity to bring teams from each state to align understandings, plans, and resources.

- **Manufacturing Competitiveness Collaborative (formerly known as Pennsylvania Manufacturing Advisory Council):** The Collaborative met on October 16th in Pittsburgh. During the meeting, there were a series of great discussions, between panels about industrial decarbonization/energy transition with national energy experts and manufacturing leaders in the morning, to a working session with the Collaborative in the afternoon. Participants had a chance to deepen learning about industrial decarbonization, discuss what's next around the Factory of the Future strategy, and tour the world-class Manufacturing Futures Institute labs and ARM Robotics Hub at Mill 19. Information on real-time funding opportunities for manufacturers around deploying energy-saving technologies (especially RISE PA).
- **Industry Partnerships (IPs):** DCED continues to partner with L&I on IPs through participation on monthly Community of Practice calls with the IPs across the commonwealth and monthly partnership calls.
- **2024 State Board Committees:** DCED is a member of the following Board committee groups:
 - **Industry Partnership and Employer Engagement Committee**
 - **Manufacturing Industry Sub-Committee**

Quarterly Meeting Agency Update

November 19th, 2024

Agency: PA Department of Agriculture

Agriculture Apprenticeships and Pre-Apprenticeships

- There are 8 registered ag related apprenticeship programs and 3 ag related pre-apprenticeship programs.
- The Department has been working closely with other groups interested in apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship and is exploring ideas for potential programs in organics, conservation and more.
- The Department will be hosting and celebrating National Apprenticeship Week with an event at Zahncroft Dairy in Berks County.

PA Commission for Agricultural Education Excellence

- The commission is focusing on three different “prongs” of agricultural education k-8, Secondary, Post-secondary/career transition/Veterans/Reentering Citizens
- The Commission has Focus will be for three different “prongs” k-8, Secondary, Post-secondary/career transition/Veteran/Reentering Citizens
- The 2024 Ag Ed Annual Report is being finalized and will be posted to the PDA website for public viewing.

Farm Show 2025

- The Department is underway with planning for Farm Show 2025. This year’s theme will be Powering Pennsylvania and will occur January 4th-11th. There will be numerous events and opportunities during the week focused on agriculture education and workforce development.

Employer Engagement

- The Department has been working hard to continuously engage our ag employers across the state. We have focused on use of the H-2A and H-2B programs and the experience of employers utilizing these programs.

Quarterly Meeting Agency Update

November 19, 2024

Agency: Department of Aging

The Department of Aging and the Senior Community Service Program (SCSEP) has just finished the first quarter of the 202y program year. Currently we are at 108% capacity, having 476 active participants out of 439 total slots. We also had 21 participants leave SCSEP this quarter for employment, 6 verify they were still employed after two quarters after exit, and 4 verify employment four quarters after exit.

The grant process for the SCSEP 2024 program year has been finalized. The Depart of Aging will be administering the Pennsylvania SCSEP grant through 7 local Area Agency on Aging and the AARP Foundation. The award is for \$4,257,091 to be budgeted out to the 8 agencies determined by community needs. PDA looks forward to another productive program year partnering with nonprofits to facility employment training in the 55 and older community.

SCSEP is the only employment and training program specifically servicing adults 55 years old and older. To find out more about this program, or to find out which organizations operate a SCSEP program in your workforce development are please contact David Miles at davimiles@pa.gov or 717-783-0178.

Quarterly Meeting Agency Update

November 19, 2024

Agency: Corrections

Partnerships with Other Agencies

At the beginning of July 2023, Philadelphia Works and PA CareerLink initiated services at five Philadelphia area Community Correctional Centers (CCCs), benefiting reentrants by providing essential services and overcoming transportation challenges. The services include a welcome workshop, PA CareerLink registrations, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) services, and workshops in the various Bureau of Community Corrections (BCC) centers. Since its inception, **398** reentrants have participated and were served by PA CareerLink staff. In January 2024, the PA CareerLink visits to the centers doubled due to interest and demand.

July 2024 – September 2024 Overall Analysis

Location	Total Customers Engaged July - September 2024	Customers who attended PA CareerLink® Orientation	Customers who Completed the Questionnaire	Customers who Enrolled in Labor Exchange	Customers Enrolled in WIOA	Customers Referred to Training	Customers placed in employment
CCC* /Gaudenzia	4	0	2	0	0	0	0
Gaudenzia DRC	9	8	0	0	0	0	0
Kintock-Erie	9	3	7	0	0	0	0
Mobile Unit	10	0	0	0	0	0	0
Self-Help, Inc.	9	3	5	2	0	0	0
Total	41	14	14	2	0	0	0

Location	Total Customers Engaged July 2023 – June 2024	Customers who attended PA CareerLink® Orientation	Customers who Completed the Questionnaire	Customers who Enrolled in Labor Exchange	Customers Enrolled in WIOA	Customers Referred to Training	Customers placed in employment
CCC* /Gaudenzia	66	52	22	19	1	0	0
Gaudenzia DRC	54	27	24	25	0	0	0
Kintock-Erie	158	89	61	67	7	0	5
Mobile Unit	15	14	7	2	0	0	0
Self-Help, Inc.	64	35	19	23	1	0	0
Total	357	220	133	137	9	0	5

*CCC – Community Corrections Center

On September 3, 2024, the Workforce Development Specialist discussed the Philadelphia Works partnership inside the CCCs with Partner for Work (Pittsburgh). A future meeting will be held to discuss expansion to Pittsburgh area CCCs.

On September 23, 2024, the Pennsylvania Restaurant and Lodging Association (PR&LA) hosted a “road show” for members to learn various tools to improve talent recruitment and retention. The Workforce Development Specialist shared information on the vocational and employment programs inside the DOC, tailored to the restaurant and lodging industry. The event was held in Philadelphia (9/23/24).

On October 1, 2024, the Workforce Development Specialist provided a presentation at the annual Community Corrections Association of Pennsylvania conference. Information on the vocational and employment programs offered inside the DOC were shared as well as the benefits to hiring reentrants.

On October 24, 2024, the Workforce Development Specialist provided a presentation at the Hospitality Industry Partnership meeting hosted by Philadelphia Works. Information on the vocational and employment programs offered inside the DOC were shared as well as the benefits to hiring reentrants.

The Workforce Development Specialist continues to assist employers in filling their workforce needs throughout the quarter, and Corrections/Parole remains actively involved in various Labor & Industry committees on Employment and Reentry. Conversations with employers continue to expand a “Prison to Work Pipeline,” which will allow inmates to interview for jobs pre-release.

Reentry Services

Annually, each SCI coordinates and hosts a reentry job fair for inmates, inviting community partners, including employers, community service providers, BCC contractors, and other agency representatives, to provide information and presentations. The Network for Success Fairs for 2024/2025 are currently being scheduled. If you or anyone else is interested in attending, please email Dorenda Hamarlund at dhamarlund@pa.gov.

2022 Population		
Total Population	12,989,208	100.0%
Female	6,578,442	50.6%
Male	6,410,766	49.4%

Population by Race		
White	10,010,379	77.1%
Black	1,407,814	10.8%
Other	1,571,015	12.1%
Hispanic Ethnicity (All Races)	1,055,108	8.1%

Population by Age		
Ages 0 to 17	2,664,562	20.5%
Ages 18 to 24	1,196,563	9.2%
Ages 25 to 34	1,697,433	13.1%
Ages 35 to 44	1,573,905	12.1%
Ages 45 to 54	1,606,942	12.4%
Ages 55 to 64	1,815,398	14.0%
Ages 65 to 74	1,404,780	10.8%
Ages 75 and Older	1,029,625	7.9%
Median Age	40.8	

Educational Attainment, Ages 18 and Older		
High School Diploma or Less	4,385,485	42.5%
Some College or Associate Degree	2,694,345	26.1%
Bachelor's Degree	1,995,520	19.3%
Graduate or Professional Degree	1,249,296	12.1%

Source: U.S. Census ACS 2018-2022 - DP05, B01001, and B15001

Help Wanted OnLine Job Postings			
Sep 2024	Sep 2023	Volume Change	Percent Change
230,491	185,665	44,826	24.1%

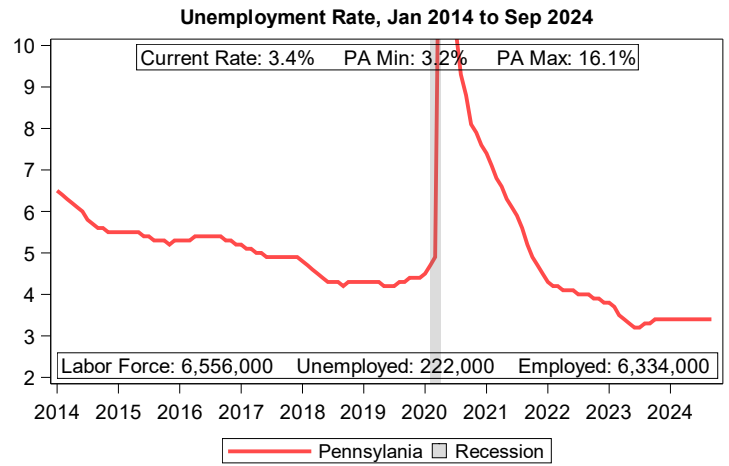
Source: The Conference Board - LightCast - Help Wanted OnLine™

Veterans			Non-Veterans	
Total	Unemployment Rate	Median Income	Unemployment Rate	Median Income
680,824	4.2%	\$46,106	5.3%	\$37,475

Source: U.S. Census ACS 2018-2022 (Table: S2101)

Resident Income				
Per Capita	Total Income	Earnings	Dividends-Interest-Rent	Transfer Payments
\$64,506	\$836,778,334	\$511,019,899	\$151,238,652	\$174,519,783

Note: Income (excluding Per Capita) is displayed in thousands.
Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) - 2022



Top 25 Employers by Employment in Q1 of 2024

- Federal Government
- State Government
- Wal-Mart Associates Inc
- Trustees of the University of PA
- City of Philadelphia
- Giant Food Stores LLC
- Amazon.com Services LLC
- Pennsylvania State University
- School District of Philadelphia
- UPMC Presbyterian Shadyside
- United Parcel Service Inc
- The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia
- University of Pittsburgh
- PNC Bank NA
- Lowe's Home Centers LLC
- Saint Luke's Hospital
- Weis Markets Inc
- Giant Eagle Inc
- Home Depot USA Inc
- Target Corporation
- The Vanguard Group Inc
- Comcast Cablevision Corp (PA)
- Lehigh Valley Hospital Center
- Merck Sharp & Dohme Corporation
- Universal Protection Service LLC

Source: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages

Unemployment Compensation (UC) by Pre-UC Industry	Oct 2023 to Sep 2024		Sep 2024 Initial (IC) and Continued (CC) UC Claims			
	Exhaustees	Percent	IC Total	IC Percent	CC Total	CC Percent
Natural Resources and Mining	540	0.9%	367	1.1%	3,378	0.8%
Construction	7,100	11.7%	5,029	15.1%	34,026	8.5%
Manufacturing	7,020	11.6%	4,806	14.4%	50,554	12.6%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	11,480	19.0%	6,064	18.2%	82,509	20.6%
Information	1,500	2.5%	523	1.6%	8,026	2.0%
Financial Activities	3,330	5.5%	1,292	3.9%	21,111	5.3%
Professional and Business Services	12,530	20.7%	4,989	14.9%	73,720	18.4%
Education and Health Service	9,140	15.1%	5,106	15.3%	73,603	18.4%
Leisure and Hospitality	4,570	7.5%	2,613	7.8%	30,568	7.6%
Other Services	1,660	2.7%	779	2.3%	11,179	2.8%
Public Administration	1,150	1.9%	300	0.9%	3,763	0.9%
Unclassified Industry	520	0.9%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	60,540	100%	33,377	100%	400,892	100%

Notes: Percentages less than 0.5% will be displayed as 0.0%. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding. Claims data are not comparable to claims data released in any other report.

Source: Pennsylvania Unemployment Compensation System

Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, 2023 Annual Averages						
NAICS	NAICS Description	Establishments	Employment	Employment %	Average Wage	
	Total, All Industries	385,936	5,963,025	100.0%	\$69,252	
11	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	2,594	27,249	0.5%	\$44,014	
21	Mining, Quarrying, and Oil & Gas	1,130	22,118	0.4%	\$101,711	
22	Utilities	1,425	34,054	0.6%	\$110,867	
23	Construction	30,738	268,718	4.5%	\$77,927	
31-33	Manufacturing	14,549	566,896	9.5%	\$74,597	
42	Wholesale Trade	23,106	216,986	3.6%	\$99,656	
44-45	Retail Trade	40,128	601,132	10.1%	\$36,721	
48-49	Transportation and Warehousing	13,212	345,491	5.8%	\$59,247	
51	Information	9,154	96,556	1.6%	\$119,947	
52	Finance and Insurance	20,436	273,127	4.6%	\$118,105	
53	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	12,404	67,704	1.1%	\$74,573	
54	Professional and Technical Services	52,871	398,002	6.7%	\$117,065	
55	Management of Companies and Enterprises	7,119	147,596	2.5%	\$153,152	
56	Administrative and Waste Services	19,890	303,622	5.1%	\$51,067	
61	Educational Services	10,074	485,148	8.1%	\$67,022	
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	52,367	1,108,490	18.6%	\$63,414	
71	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	5,952	102,276	1.7%	\$43,044	
72	Accommodation and Food Services	28,433	461,744	7.7%	\$24,729	
81	Other Services (Except Public Administration)	35,286	203,144	3.4%	\$43,903	
92	Public Administration	5,069	232,974	3.9%	\$73,804	

Company Ownership						
Total, All Ownership		385,936	5,963,025	100.0%	\$69,252	
Private Ownership		372,883	5,301,081	88.9%	\$69,300	
Federal Ownership		2,662	101,636	1.7%	\$90,018	
State Ownership		1,496	126,229	2.1%	\$71,770	
Local Ownership		8,895	434,079	7.3%	\$63,079	

Occupational Employment (2020) and Wages (2023)						
SOC Code	Major Occupational Group	Employment	Entry Wage	Average Wage	Experienced Wage	
	Total, All Occupations	5,923,090	\$29,860	\$61,920	\$77,700	
11-0000	Management	329,650	\$64,540	\$131,660	\$164,710	
13-0000	Business & Financial Operations	307,330	\$47,270	\$82,990	\$100,590	
15-0000	Computer & Mathematical	168,390	\$54,840	\$98,060	\$119,350	
17-0000	Architecture & Engineering	102,710	\$57,460	\$92,950	\$110,430	
19-0000	Life, Physical & Social Science	56,570	\$48,260	\$82,210	\$98,930	
21-0000	Community & Social Services	129,510	\$36,700	\$55,040	\$64,080	
23-0000	Legal	48,600	\$51,470	\$120,620	\$154,680	
25-0000	Education, Training & Library	322,980	\$34,430	\$68,610	\$85,440	
27-0000	Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports & Media	76,840	\$32,120	\$61,640	\$76,180	
29-0000	Healthcare Practitioners & Technical	410,120	\$48,400	\$97,160	\$121,170	
31-0000	Healthcare Support	323,520	\$26,680	\$35,120	\$39,290	
33-0000	Protective Service	123,720	\$30,510	\$56,120	\$68,740	
35-0000	Food Preparation & Serving Related	403,000	\$21,170	\$31,550	\$36,660	
37-0000	Building & Grounds Cleaning & Maintenance	185,730	\$27,390	\$37,490	\$42,470	
39-0000	Personal Care & Service	159,270	\$22,380	\$35,260	\$41,610	
41-0000	Sales & Related	525,290	\$24,850	\$50,440	\$63,050	
43-0000	Office & Administrative Support	811,460	\$31,640	\$46,810	\$54,280	
45-0000	Farming, Fishing & Forestry	42,050	\$25,510	\$41,590	\$49,510	
47-0000	Construction & Extraction	244,620	\$40,300	\$61,810	\$72,410	
49-0000	Installation, Maintenance & Repair	232,680	\$36,690	\$57,200	\$67,300	
51-0000	Production	361,760	\$32,920	\$48,120	\$55,600	
53-0000	Transportation & Material Moving	557,300	\$30,290	\$45,770	\$53,400	

Note: 'ND' represents Non-Disclosable information.

WIOA Title I and Title III Workforce Performance Outcome Progress Program Year 2024 (Through 1st Quarter) Statewide

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act assesses statewide performance at the end of the program year using a three-tier method for all core programs:

- The Overall Program Score for all programs must be at or above 90 percent. These represent the margin by which the state is currently achieving the adjusted negotiated goals for all outcome metrics within a given program.
- The Overall Indicator Score for all indicators must be at or above 90 percent. These represent the margin by which the state is currently achieving adjusted negotiated goals for each performance outcome metric across all core WIOA programs.
- The Individual Indicator Score for all performance outcome metrics must be at or above 50 percent of the adjusted negotiated level of performance.

The information below evaluates Pennsylvania’s current scores, rather than raw performance, and is based on Program Year 2024 First Quarter performance results compared to our unadjusted negotiated level of performance for the Title I and Title III programs only. Adjusted negotiated levels will be available in January 2026.

Overall Program Scores

Not Meeting	Meeting	Exceeding
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Overall Indicator Scores

90.7% Title I Adult	94.6% Title I Dislocated Worker	88.8% Title I Youth	99.8% Title III Wagner-Peyser
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99.6% Employed 2 nd Quarter	98.6% Employed 4 th Quarter	108.5% Median Earnings	98.1% Credential Attainment	49.6% Measurable Skill Gain
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Individual Indicator Scores

(actual performance/negotiated level)

	Employed 2 nd Quarter	Employed 4 th Quarter	Median Earnings 2 nd Quarter	Credential Attainment	Measurable Skill Gain
Title I Adult	98.7% <small>(76.0% / 77.0%)</small>	93.9% <small>(70.4% / 75.0%)</small>	103.5% <small>(\$8278 / \$8000)</small>	101.5% <small>(72.1% / 71.0%)</small>	55.8% <small>(35.7% / 64.0%)</small>
Title I Dislocated Worker	102.1% <small>(82.2% / 80.5%)</small>	97.5% <small>(78.5% / 80.5%)</small>	102.2% <small>(\$10221 / \$10000)</small>	109.1% <small>(80.7% / 74.0%)</small>	62.0% <small>(36.6% / 59.0%)</small>
Title I Youth	97.6% <small>(68.3% / 70.0%)</small>	102.6% <small>(69.8% / 68.0%)</small>	129.1% <small>(\$5421 / \$4200)</small>	83.8% <small>(55.3% / 66.0%)</small>	31.0% <small>(19.5% / 63.0%)</small>
Title III Wagner-Peyser	100.0% <small>(65.0% / 65.0%)</small>	100.3% <small>(67.2% / 67.0%)</small>	99.1% <small>(\$7433 / \$7500)</small>		

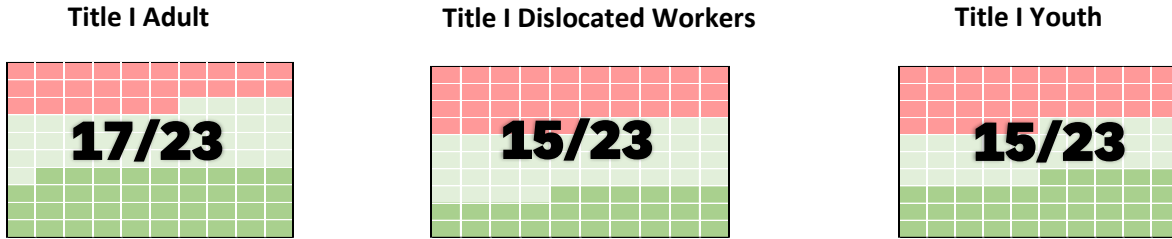
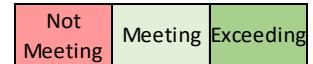
WIOA Title I and Title III Workforce Performance Outcome Progress Through 1st Quarter Program Year 2024 Local Workforce Development Areas

WIOA allows for the creation of local workforce development areas to oversee the provision of Title I workforce programs within their region. Twenty-three such areas have been designated in Pennsylvania and are overseen by twenty-two local workforce development boards – the Three Rivers Workforce Development Board (Partner4Work) directs Title I program activities within the City of Pittsburgh and the Balance of Allegheny County local workforce development areas.

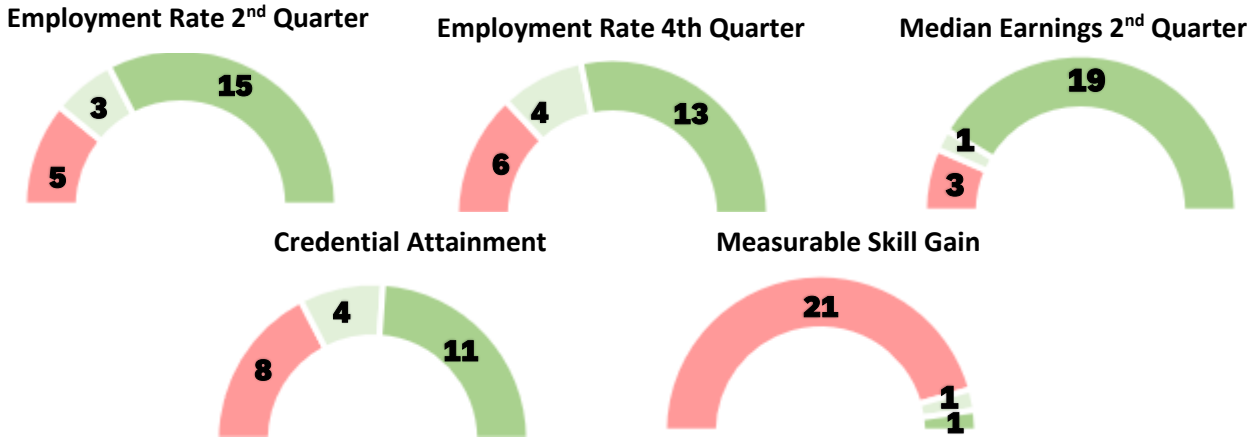
Local performance is evaluated only on outcomes for the Title I programs. States, under authority from WIOA, establish their own methods by which to assess performance outcomes of each local workforce development area. The Department of Labor & Industry has chosen to mirror the WIOA methodology, which is described in the WIOA performance reporting workforce system policy released in August 2020.

Graphics below indicate the number of local areas currently exceeding, meeting, or not meeting unadjusted negotiated levels of performance. Adjusted negotiated levels will be available in January 2026.

Overall Program Scores



Overall Indicator Scores



Individual Indicator Scores

	Title I Adult			Title I Dislocated Workers			Title I Youth		
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter	0	9	14	0	10	13	0	9	14
Employment Rate 4th Quarter	0	13	10	0	11	12	1	8	14
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter	0	5	18	0	8	15	2	5	16
Credential Attainment	0	8	15	2	7	14	6	7	10
Measurable Skill Gain	8	14	1	10	12	1	16	5	2

WIOA Title I and Title III Workforce Performance Outcome Progress Through 1st Quarter Program Year 2024

Definitions

Performance Measures

Employment Rate (2nd Quarter) - % of program participants in unsubsidized employment in the 2nd quarter after exit

Note: Outcomes for the Youth program also include those who were in education or training during the 2nd quarter after exit.

Employment Rate (4th Quarter) - % of program participants in unsubsidized employment in the 4th quarter after exit

Note: Outcomes for the Youth program also include those who were in education or training during the 4th quarter after exit.

Median Earnings - Median earnings of program participants who have unsubsidized employment during the 2nd quarter after exit

Credential Attainment - % of program participants who during participation or within one year from exit: 1) attain a high school diploma/equivalent along with employment or enrollment in postsecondary training or 2) attained a postsecondary credential

Measurable Skill Gain - % of program participants in an education or training program who achieve milestone skill gains including but not limited to an increase in basic skills or completion of an OJT within the program year

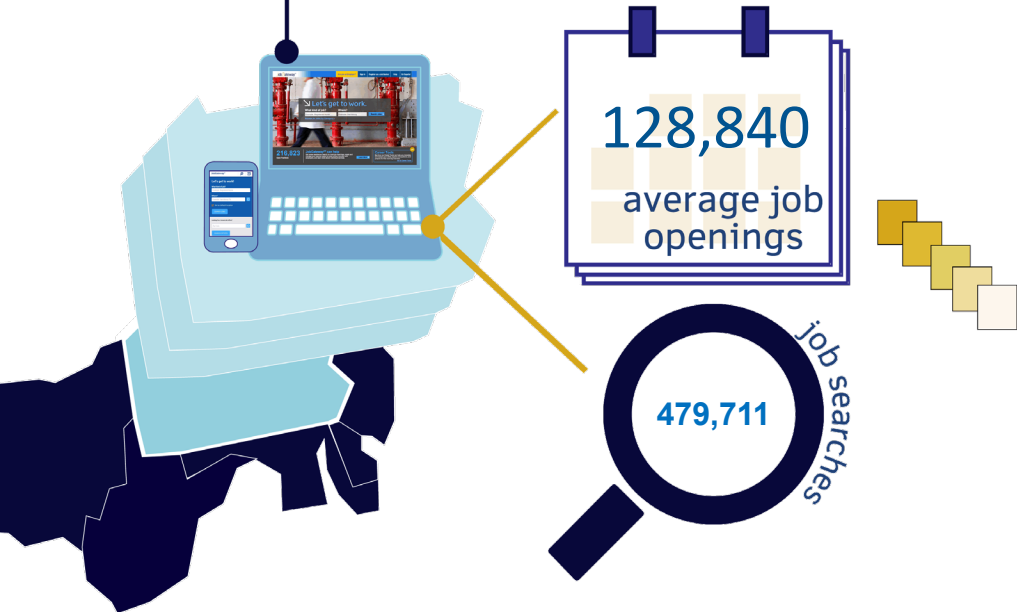
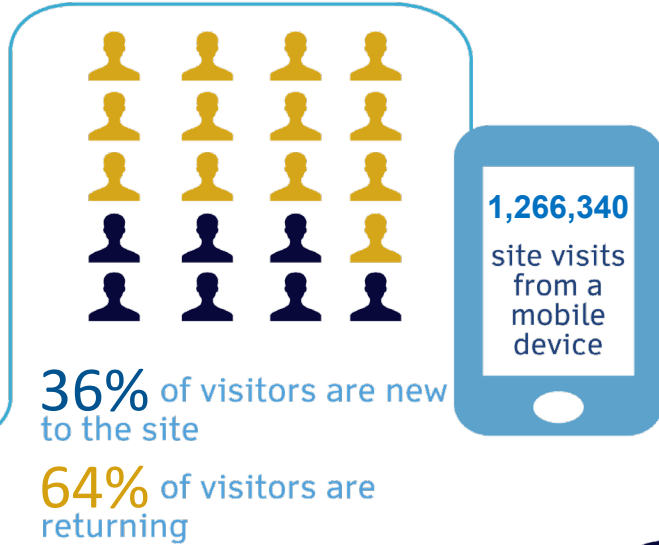
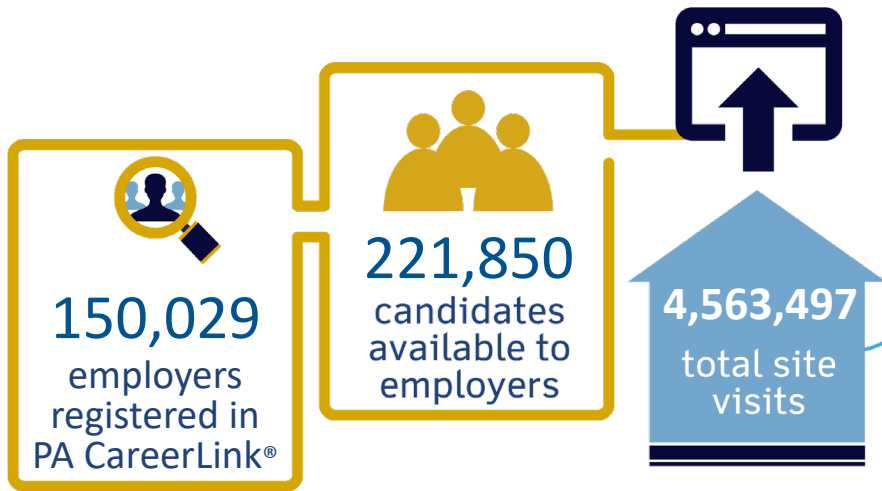
Reporting Cohorts

Performance for the first five measures is determined at a point in time after exit – either 2nd quarter or 4th quarter. Therefore, performance results for these measures are based on participants who completed services at some point in the past. The exception to this is the last performance measure, measurable skill gain, which is evaluated while a participant is actively receiving program services. The chart below provides the timeframes of participants, or participant cohorts, that were measured for the provided results.

Performance Measure	Reporting Cohort
Employment Rate 2 nd Quarter	July 1, 2023 through September 30, 2023
Employment Rate 4 th Quarter	January 1, 2023 through March 31, 2023
Median Earnings 2 nd Quarter	July 1, 2023 through September 30, 2023
Credential Attainment	January 1, 2023 through March 31, 2023
Measurable Skill Gain	July 1, 2024 through September 30, 2024

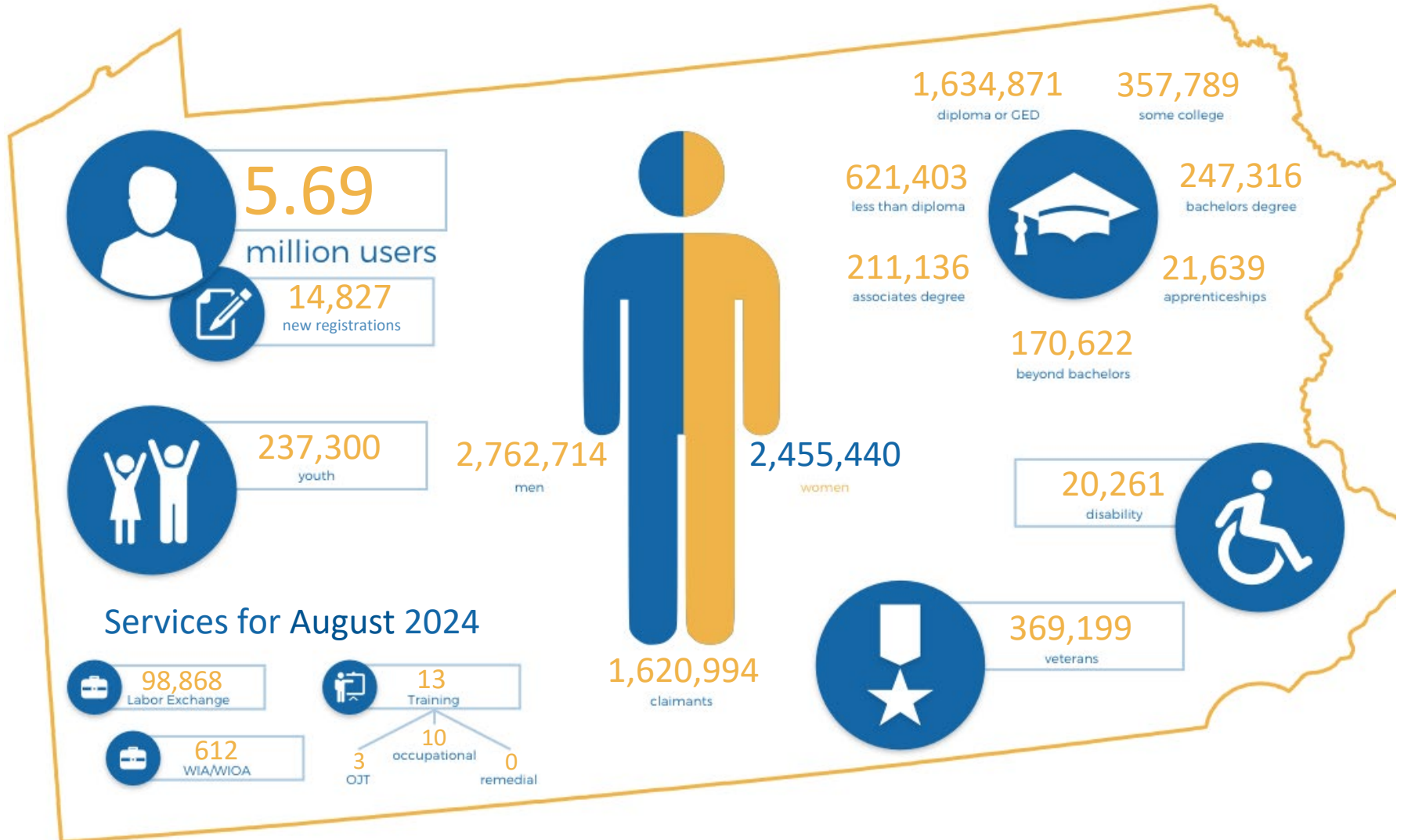
Footnotes

Performance results based on partial year results can fluctuate dramatically due to the cyclical nature of both program enrollments and availability of outcome documentation. This is especially relevant to the Youth program, where some local areas may enroll participants in cohorts at specific times of the year rather than individually throughout the year. The credential attainment and measurable skill gain outcomes see increases that align to the natural breaks in educational cycles.



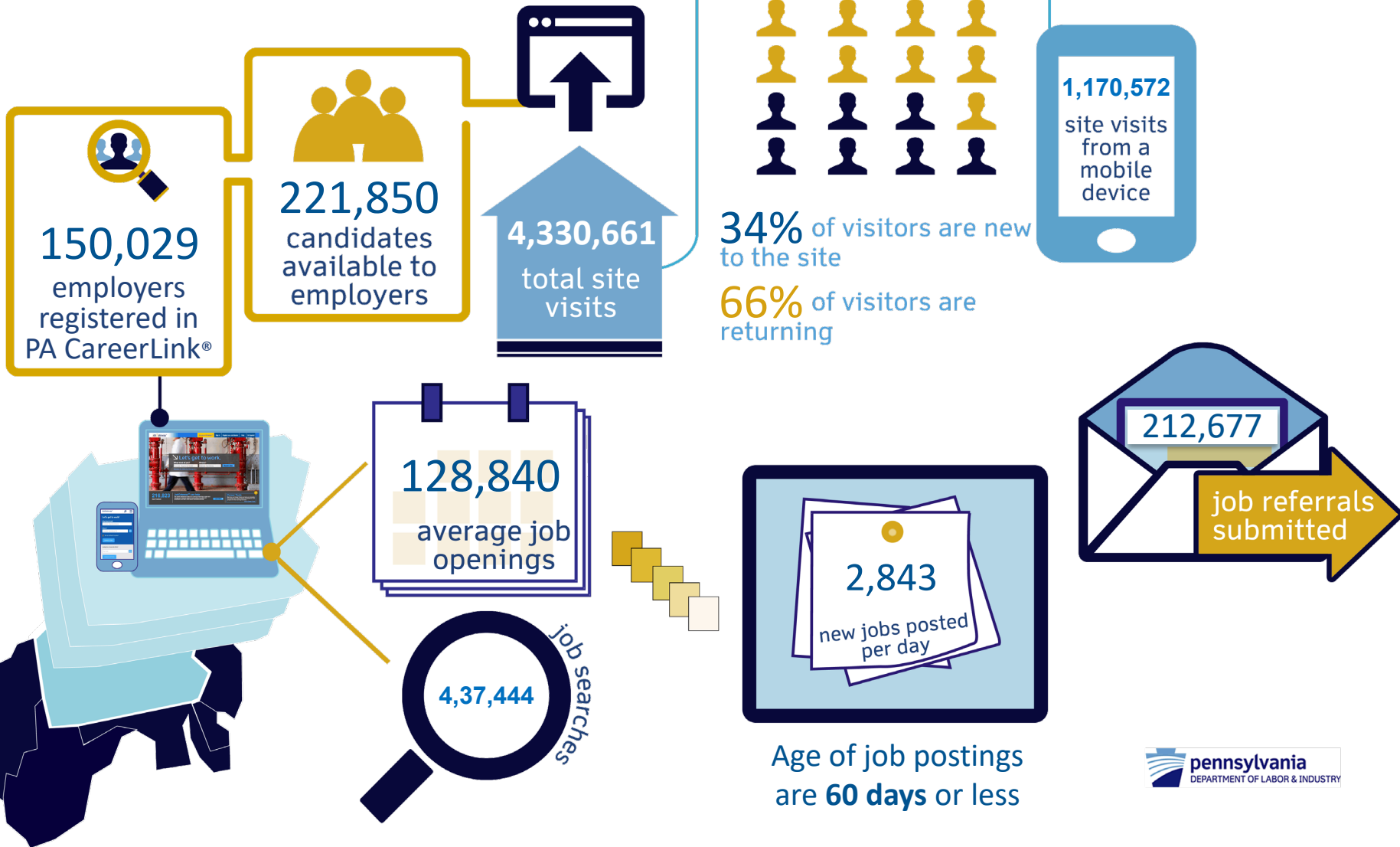
Age of job postings are **60 days** or less

CWDS/PA CareerLink® User Demographics & Services

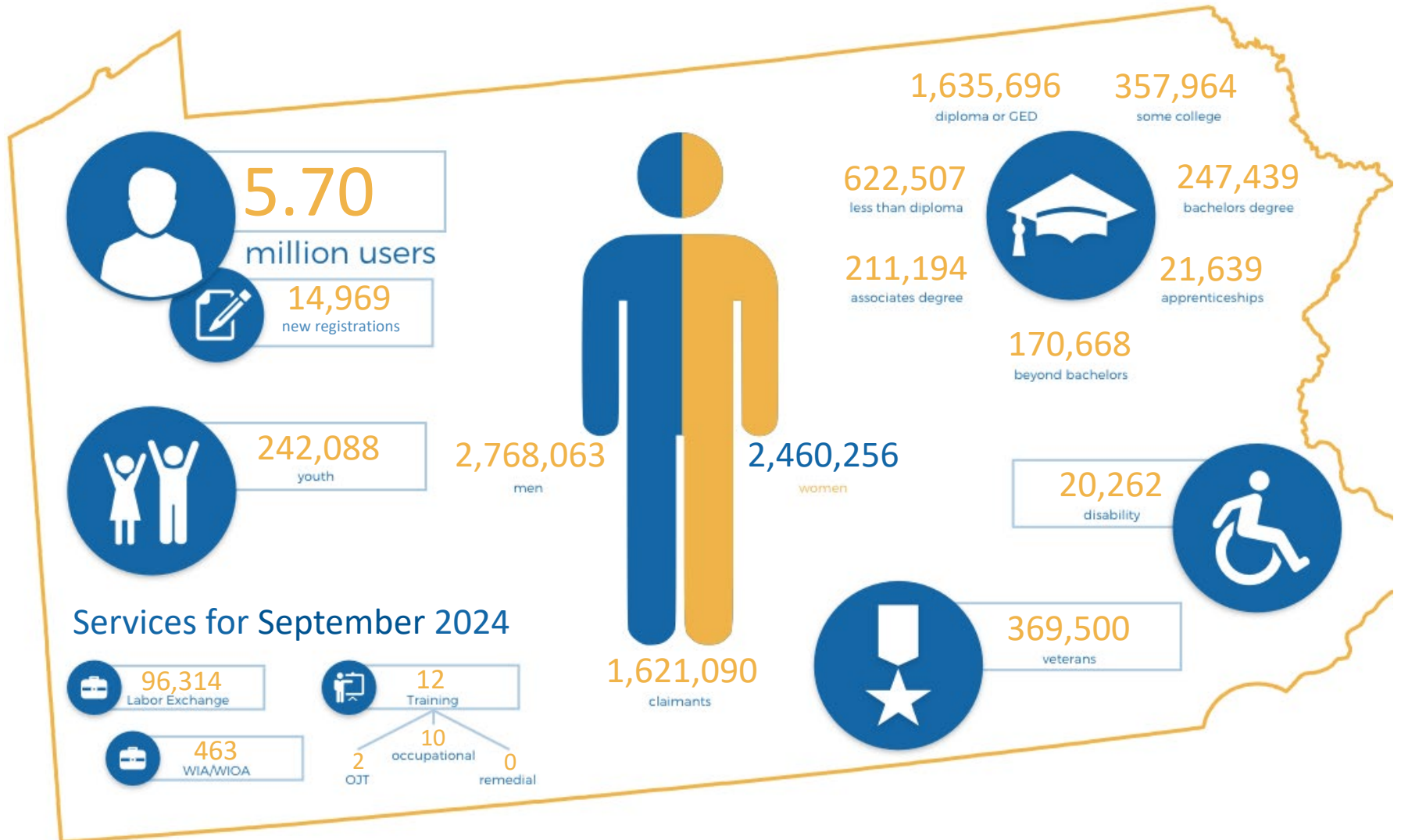


Infographic Description

#	Metric	Description	Notes	Source	Source Detail
1	Employers registered in PA CareerLink®	Total Employer Profiles based on FEIN	Cumulative (Based on FEINs and SSNs)	CWDS Business Report	Employer #7: Employers -Total - TOTAL COUNT
2	Candidates available to PA employers	Job Seekers with "Want Employers to Find You" marked as "Yes"	Job seekers with job preferences enabled (cumulative)	CWDS Business Report	Participant #13: Participants with Job Preferences Enabled - TOTAL COUNT
3	Total site visits	Number of times PA CareerLink® was visited (includes new and return visits)	Per month	Google Analytics	PA CareerLink®: Customization: Dashboards: PA CareerLink InfoGraphic: Visits
4	Visitors new to the site	New visitors to PA CareerLink®	Per month	Google Analytics	PA CareerLink®: Customization: Dashboards: PA CareerLink InfoGraphic: New Visitor
5	Visitors are returning at least each month	Returning visitors to PA CareerLink®	Per month	Google Analytics	PA CareerLink®: Customization: Dashboards: PA CareerLink InfoGraphic: Returning Visitor
6	Total mobile site visits	Number of times PA CareerLink® mobile was visited (includes new and return visits)	Per month	Google Analytics	PA CareerLink®: Customization: Dashboards: PA CareerLink InfoGraphic: Private: PA CareerLink® Mobile Analytics: Visits
7	Average job openings	Current number of job openings based on the "Open Positions" value of job postings which are in open status	Current number of openings (Note: The average can be calculated by recording this number at the start, middle, and end of the month)	CWDS Business Report	Job Postings: Open Positions (Total openings for jobs in open status)
8	New jobs posted per day	New job postings based on posting date	Sum of Registered Employer and Job Feed Job postings posted (i.e. in "open" status) within the month	CWDS Business Report	Job Postings #6: All Jobs - Posted - AVG ON RPT DATES
9	Age of job posting	Length of time jobs are in open status (Note: There are variations based on type of job)	Job Feed Jobs and Registered Employer Unassisted are 60 days; Registered Employer Staff Assisted are 180 days	NA	NA
10	Number of job searches	Total number of times the Search Jobs screen is visited	Total number of times the job search screen is visited	Google Analytics	PA CareerLink®: Dashboards: Private: PA CareerLink® InfoGraphic Data: Pageviews by Page Title: PA CareerLink® - Search Jobs
11	Job referrals submitted	Number of job referrals created by either applying to a registered employer job or visiting the web site of a job feed job	Per month	CWDS Business Report	Referrals #1 - COUNT ON RPT DATES

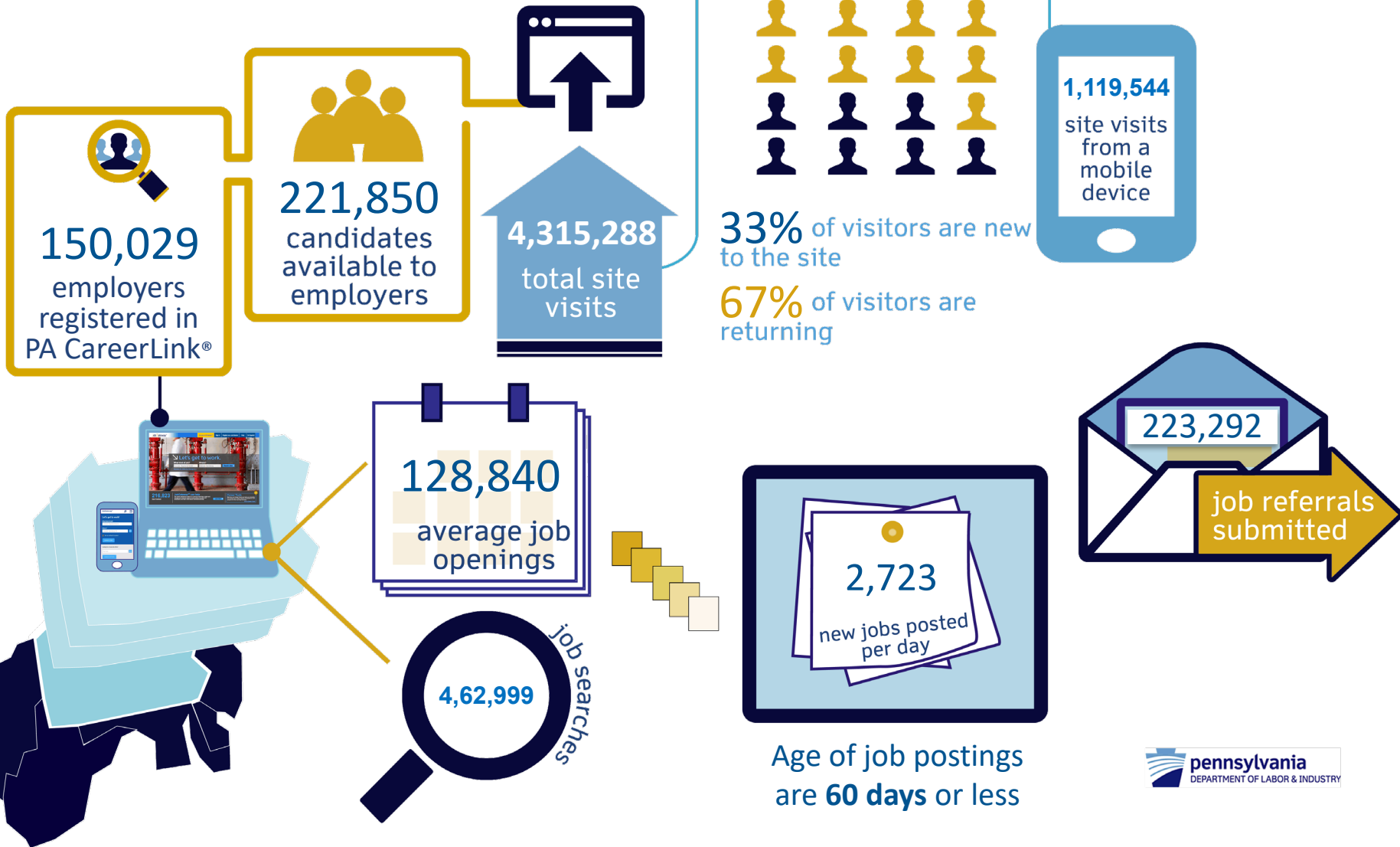


CWDS/PA CareerLink® User Demographics & Services



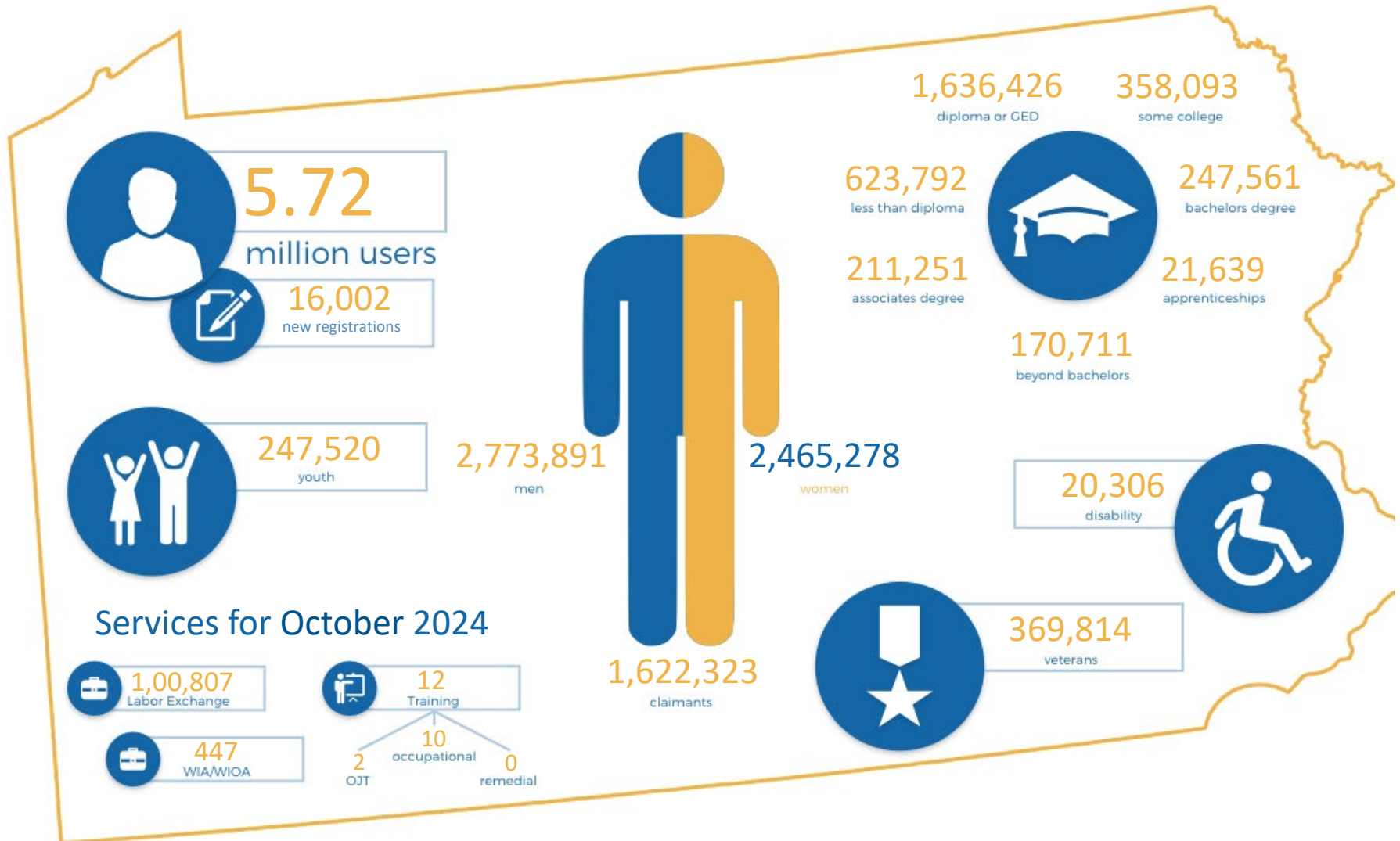
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CWDS/PA CareerLink® User Demographics & Services



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THE STORY

CELEBRATING TEACHERS & NURSES!

Jessica Wertz

“To me, having a job means that I can support myself while simultaneously benefiting my community – what more could anyone ask for?” – Jessica

Meet Jessica Wertz, a high school itinerant learning support teacher at Commonwealth Charter Academy, where she has worked for four years, teaching students with specific learning disabilities, autism, emotional disturbances, and other health impairments in grades 10 through 12.

What Jessica likes best about her job is that she’s able to connect with students and their families to help the students reach their academic goals. “I feel that my personal experience as a deaf individual helps me to relate to my students and teach them valuable life lessons about navigating the world as an individual with a disability, including disability pride and self-advocacy skills that they can utilize throughout high school, as well as after graduation when they pursue post-secondary education, employment, and/or independent living,” Jessica said.

Jessica graduated from the Indiana University of Pennsylvania in 2018 with a bachelor’s degree in disability services. In 2020, she earned her master’s degree in deaf education from the National Technical Institute for the Deaf at Rochester Institute of Technology and, in 2022, a second master’s degree in special education from IUP.

Since Jessica was a senior in high school she’s partnered with the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation’s (OVR’s) Altoona Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (BVRs) office to access a



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variety of services, including job coaching, financial assistance to obtain post-secondary education, and provision of hearing aids and hearing assistive technology, including a Roger FM system to assist her in completing college and graduate school while maintaining full-time employment. Jessica also worked at OVR's Summer Academy for Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing as a resident assistant (2017 & 2018) and a resident assistant director (2019).

When asked what has helped her overcome barriers and succeed, Jessica shared that "one of the biggest factors that helped me to succeed and overcome barriers was learning about the wide variety of options that are out there for deaf and hard of hearing individuals like me in the workforce."

Jessica's advice for others with disabilities considering employment is "to find and/or create a support network for yourself of people with disabilities who have been successful in finding and maintaining employment or who have similar goals as you." She also noted the importance of researching and trying available supports and services. Jessica explained that "so many doors opened for me once I began to utilize accommodations and assistive technology in school and in the workforce, many of which I did not have any experience with utilizing prior to becoming an OVR client."

Staff Shoutouts: Stacey Thompson, VR Counselor; Carol Nelson, Supervising VR Counselor; Brittany Peterman, VR Counselor (former); and Shasta Dreesse, Rehabilitation Counselor for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing (former)

David McCullough

For many years, David McCullough was a full-time engineer. In 2011, he reconnected with OVR's Altoona Bureau of Blindness & Visual Services (BBVS) office for assistance, as he had started his own engineer consulting business and was having difficulty working from home with his declining vision.

In 2017, due again to declining vision, David needed to reconsider career options and reached out to BBVS. He was interested in substituting for his local school district, but technology was a challenge due to his visual impairment. After working with his Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor and Vision Rehabilitation Therapist, who assisted with counseling and guidance, a low vision evaluation and low vision devices, and assistive technology, David started substituting at his local school district, and now is a regular substitute there! He has also maintained his own engineering consulting business part time. What he likes



best about his careers is “the variety of work options and the ability to work with other people.”

For David, employment means “financial security and support, a sense of community and participation in society and success in doing something right.” His advice for others with disabilities pursuing employment is to not “be afraid to ask for help and participate in the opportunities available through BBVS.”

Staff Shoutouts: Nicole Fisher, VR Counselor; Shelley Haupt, Vision Rehabilitation Therapist; and Amanda Turner, VR Supervisor

Madison Crum

Madison Crum is passionate about special education because she has relatives with disabilities and decided to pursue a career in that field. After high school graduation, she overcame barriers with repeated health issues to obtain a bachelor’s degree in special education and found employment as an autistic and emotional support teacher and transition coordinator at a local high school. What she loves about her job is that she gets to have a positive impact on students’ futures. “Having a job means a lot to me,” she shared. “Seeing how I can make a difference in student’s lives is astounding.”



Since high school, OVR’s Johnstown BVRs office has worked with Madison to provide adaptive equipment to support her success in education and financial assistance with education, including continuing to support her as she pursues her master’s degree. For Madison, family, friends, and OVR have helped her succeed, but the biggest support in her life has been her mom and her best friend.

Madison shared that having a disability often has many hidden costs, copays, minor medical bills, time off for appointments, and travel to/from appointments. All of these can take their toll both emotionally and monetarily. OVR funding, she said, has helped level the playing field for her by providing adaptations and financial assistance.

Her advice for others with disabilities who would like to pursue employment is to “get in contact with OVR. They are truly an underutilized resource. They can often help with things you did not even originally know you needed.”

Staff Shoutouts: Shawn Lasko and Raymond Grant, VR Counselors and LaShae Jeffers and Andrew Demjanenko, Supervising VR Counselors

Tiffany Weigle

When Tiffany Weigle, a mother of three, began working with OVR, she was an LPN but struggling to maintain employment as her multiple health issues, including pain and fatigue, made it difficult to complete the heavy physical demands of her job. She decided to pursue an associate RN degree that would limit direct contact work and shift her duties to involve more case management.

With OVR’s Johnstown BVRS office’s support, she undertook training at Penn West Clarion, while still working part time, and obtained her degree. Tiffany is currently working as an RN for Interim Healthcare with the goal of potentially looking into further schooling in the future as her health allows. What she loves best about her new career is being able to help people and advocate for them, especially in hospice.

Having a job not only provides for her family it also, “makes me feel like I am making a difference,” she said.

Tiffany’s family, friends, church members, coworkers, and colleagues have all helped her succeed on her employment journey. When asked what her advice is for others pursuing employment, she encouraged individuals “not to be afraid to ask for help. In school, with OVR, and in life, advocate for yourself.”

Staff Shoutouts: Raymond Grant, VR Counselor, and Sarah Weckoski, Supervising VR Counselor



Catherine

Catherine began working with OVR's Norristown BVRs office following a traumatic brain injury and rehabilitative care. With the OVR Norristown team's support, which included supported employment, assessments, financial aid for training, and counseling and guidance, she was able to identify her passion for caring for others and pursue an education in nursing. Today she is working full time as an RN!

Catherine describes being an RN as her "dream job," and what she likes best about it is both the freedom it gives her and the relationships she's been able to build with coworkers. She also shared that she feels "pride in telling people what I do."

For Catherine, having a job "means the world". She said that now, "I am able, financially, mentally, and physically, to live on my own and I feel like I have control over my life. I now feel like my condition does not define me. I am a person who lives with disabilities, who fought to get the upper hand on my disabilities, and I proved to those that underestimated me that I am able!"

She encourages other individuals with disabilities who are considering employment to make a plan and celebrate every achievement. "Going from dealing with my disability every day to including a job and responsibilities had a lot of little steps," she said. "I worked with my doctors, therapists, and my family to figure out what I wanted to do, what job type would make me happy. Then we looked at the requirements and made a plan for me to be able to accomplish those requirements. We celebrated every little accomplishment, from going to a full week of classes alone without an issue, passing an exam, getting the degree, and being offered a job."

Catherine credits her "entire village" with helping her succeed, including her VR Counselor; cognitive, physical, occupational, and emotional therapists; and her family and friends. One of her strategies was to remember her reasons for pursuing



employment. "I kept a list of reasons for why I was doing all of this hard work to motivate me to keep pushing."

Staff Shoutouts: Geni George and Jamie Luthy, VR Counselors; Neil Marzullo, VR Counselor (former); Susan Galyo, VR Counselor (retired); and Cheryl Novak, Policy, Staff Development & Training Division Chief

Jonathan Dilick

"My advice to individuals with disabilities seeking employment would be to never give up, don't doubt yourself, and don't be afraid to ask for help (BBVS)." – Jonathan

My story started in the summer of 2010. After completing my freshman year at Saint Francis University, I was planning on transferring to IUP the following year. During that summer, my life changed forever. I was diagnosed with a rare visual condition called Leber's Hereditary Optic Neuropathy (LHON). This condition severely altered my central vision and deemed me legally blind. After numerous ophthalmology appointments, I chose to take a semester off of college, to navigate this new journey. With the help of BBVS, I was provided with sponsorship and technology support (laptop, visual software, glasses, and others) that allowed me to return to school. The following spring, I attended IUP Northpointe to pursue a degree in education. After three semesters at Northpointe, I then attended IUP Main Campus (Indiana). For the next three and a half years, I worked tremendously hard, achieved a cumulative GPA of 3.55 (Magna Cum Laude), and received my bachelor's degree in health and physical education. In addition to my degree and teacher certification, I minored in sport management, received an athletic coaching certification, and won my graduating class departmental award (Outstanding Senior in teacher education).



After graduation from IUP, I was hired as a part-time health and physical education teacher at Divine Redeemer School (Ford City) and subbed day-to-day in Armstrong School District. Along with subbing and working at DRS, I also worked at the RGS

YMCA as an adaptive instructor (fall, winter, and spring) and a day camp counselor (summer).

Four years went by, and I had no luck getting hired full time in my local school district as a health and PE teacher. I then decided to contact BBVS to inform them that I planned on going back to school to pursue a master's degree in special education. BBVS reopened my case, and I was accepted to IUP's graduate program. In two and a half years, I received my master's degree and special education K-12 teacher certification. During that time, I maintained a 3.90 GPA. While pursuing my master's degree (online), I continued to substitute for Armstrong and work at the RGS YMCA.

In the fall of 2022, I was presented with the opportunity to work as a long-term special education teacher at Armstrong Jr./Sr. High School. It was a tremendous experience and part way through the year, a position became available. This was my third interview and I felt more prepared than ever! A few weeks went by, and I received one of the best phone calls of my life. The ASD HR director informed me that I got the job! The position was a 7-12 learning support job at West Shamokin Jr./Sr. High School. I finished the final marking period at West Shamokin, and I've been there since. My favorite part about my job as a learning support (special education) teacher is providing the support that my students need and my everyday interactions with them.

My dream of being a full-time teacher had come true! It may not have been the easiest journey, but it was well worth the ride. Having a full-time teaching job makes me feel accomplished and allows me to provide a stable income for my family. I don't have to worry about working multiple jobs just to get by. Thank you BBVS for being such a tremendous support throughout my journey!

Staff Shoutouts: Michelle Markle, VR Counselor; James McNeil and Allison Mervis, VR Counselors (former); and Kiriam Harney, Orientation & Mobility Specialist

Partner Shoutouts: Dr. Paul Freeman (Low Vision Specialist - Allegheny General), Michele (Dr. Freeman's Assistant), Dr. Erik Happ (Allegheny General Ophthalmologist), and Gary Looker (AT instructor)

Cassandra Drumm

Cassandra Drumm applied for OVR services in 2021 while employed as a pre-school teacher with Community Action Partnership in Pequea Valley. She came to OVR for support in maintaining her job as she had faced challenges the previous school year understanding students during COVID with masking. OVR's York BVRs team provided Cassandra with a hearing evaluation and also assisted her with getting new hearing aids and supplies. As a result, her communication with students and teachers improved.



During the summer of 2023, Cassandra applied for a new position with Community Action Partnership and was hired. She is now employed as a social/emotional learning and disability specialist for the school.

What she loves about her job is that she is "working at a place where I get to advocate for children with disabilities and work with them and their families every day." For Cassandra, her job allows her to invest in the community that invested in her. "I am able to serve children and families from poverty who have disabilities and give them the encouragement, support, and tools they need to succeed just like many have done for me throughout my life," said Cassandra. "My job brings me so much fulfillment and joy in life as I give back to others."

Cassandra encourages other individuals with disabilities who are considering employment to "be true to who you are, and don't let others make you feel like you should have to hide your disability or feel lesser because of it."

It is through everyone's support, Cassandra said, including her family, friends, teachers, OVR staff, and service providers, that she has been able to "continue to succeed." Of her family and friends support she said that they "have supported and encouraged me through every step and taught me not to hold myself back or let anything stop me from achieving my goals."

Staff Shoutouts: Kelsey Hurst, VR Counselor

Michael Harchick



Michael has been employed as a teacher since 1980 and has worked with OVR's BBVS throughout his teaching career to help maintain his employment. In 2022, he reached out to BBVS to obtain recommendations for new technology for job retention, and OVR's Altoona BBVS team assisted him with vision rehabilitation therapy services; counseling and guidance; a low vision evaluation and devices; an assistive technology evaluation, training, and devices; and job retention services. With his new technology, Michael was able to maintain his teaching job! What he likes best about his job is, simply, "being around the kids." He credits his parents, wife, and college coach with helping him succeed over the years and overcome barriers. Having a job has meant both financial security and has given him a purpose. It also

allows him to help out, which he enjoys.

His advice for other individuals with disabilities considering employment is to not "let any obstacles in front of you limit you. Find your way around them and don't be embarrassed when you need help."

For students with disabilities, he encourages them to "think positively, use your technology, earn your grades."

Staff Shoutouts: Nicole Fisher, VR Counselor; Sarah Krug, Vision Rehabilitation Therapist; and Amanda Turner, VR Supervisor

Madison Weaver

Madison Weaver knew from an early age that she wanted to become a teacher like her mother. While in high school, she applied for OVR services to support her in achieving that goal. In 2019, she graduated from New Oxford High School.

OVR's York BVRS team provided testing and an assistive technology evaluation for her to receive recommendations for accommodations at college and recommendations for assistive technology that aided her in completing her educational goals.

After graduation from college, Madison obtained full time employment as a kindergarten teacher in the Conewago Valley School District, the district she was educated in. What she loves about being a kindergarten teacher is "seeing all that they [the students] have learned in their first year of school and to see the growth in them." Her purpose in teaching students is "to give love, support them in things they may be missing in their home lives, and to see their smiles every day."



Madison shared that one of her keys to success in employment and education has been that she was an advocate for herself and her needs in college. Her advice for other individuals with disabilities considering employment is to "not let their disability hold them back." She adds that "they should be kind to themselves and realize that it takes everyone some time to learn new things."

Having a therapist, she shared, "really helped me frame things in my life and to think about things differently."

Having a job in her dream career means so much to Madison. It's given her financial benefits, as well as purpose. "While the financial benefits of having a job are great," she said, "having a job that I love offers me so much more than just money. I have a strong faith and believe that God always puts you on the path that you should be on. I found my path with my students as their teacher."

Staff Shoutouts: Brady Smith Landis, VR Counselor



Josh Shapiro
Governor

Terry Wiltout
Chair